

AUGUST

VOL. 22 No. 4

1907

PRICE 25cts

THE SMART SET

A
MAG
AZINE
OF

C
L
E
V
E
R
N
E
S
S



KAY
WENRATH
00 - 07

ISSUED
MONTHLY
ON THE 15TH

ESS ESS PUBLISHING COMPANY

NEW YORK

LONDON

Digitized by Google

452 Fifth Ave.

Original from
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

PARIS

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

TRANSATLANTIC TALES

A Fiction Magazine of Translations

REDUCED TO 15 CENTS

¶ The publishers announce the above change commencing with the August number. The reasons for it are simple—in the two years of its life Transatlantic Tales has proved the existence of a large and increasing demand for the best stories of all countries. America is rapidly throwing off the provincialism which has been so marked a feature of her early development. Every year more people are going abroad; every year the gap between the old world and the new is narrowed.

¶ The publication of Transatlantic Tales marked another step in this new comradeship. The reading public of this country were beginning to realize as never before what a host of charming, fascinating stories are every year written in languages other than our own. At 25 cents Transatlantic Tales was, within certain limits, a pronounced success. But to meet the demand more completely, we have decided to put a price on this magazine which will place it within reach of all.

¶ With this new price, its policy and the quality of its stories will remain unchanged. As always, each number will be complete in itself, and will be filled with good stories by the greatest contemporary writers of Europe. No pains or expense will be spared to give to its readers the choicest selections from the world's best literature.

Read the August issue, out July 20th. It contains

The Road — complete novelette from the German of Helene von Krause
The Queen's Necklace — another adventure of Arsène Lupin
A Most Agreeable Man — from the German of Hans Arnold
The Chameleon — from the Russian of Anton Chekhov
The Heart of Mimi — from the Italian of Matilde Serao
and sixteen other good stories

¶ Buy a copy at any newsstand. Remember the new price:

15 Cents—\$1.50 a Year

ESS ESS PUBLISHING CO.,

452 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK CITY



IT IS intended to write with, not to fool with. It has no fads and no failures. It writes steadily and constantly because its construction is simple and common sense and it is the most durable writing instrument for the same reason.

The Clip-Cap keeps it handy without fear of loss, attached to coat or vest or outing shirt pocket. *For sale by all dealers.*

L.E. Waterman Co., 173 Broadway, N.Y.
 8 SCHOOL ST., BOSTON. 209 STATE ST., CHICAGO. 136 ST. JAMES ST., MONTREAL.
 742 MARKET ST., SAN FRANCISCO. 12 GOLDEN LANE, LONDON, E.C.



GRACE ELEANORE TOWNDROW

**Some
Contributors
To This
Issue**



MAARTEN MAARTENS

FOR THIS NUMBER OF THE SMART SET THE EDITORS HAVE CHOSEN A CHARMING NOVELETTE WHICH SEEMS PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE FOR A MIDSUMMER ISSUE. "MRS. CLEVINGER," BY

GRACE ELEANORE TOWNDROW

IS JUST THE SORT OF LIGHT FICTION ONE WISHES TO READ WHEN THE DAYS ARE WARM. MISS TOWNDROW IS A NEW WRITER—ONE OF THE MANY WHICH THE SMART SET TAKES PLEASURE IN INTRODUCING TO ITS READERS.

MAARTEN MAARTENS

THE BRILLIANT DUTCH NOVELIST, WRITES IN THIS NUMBER WHAT IS PERHAPS ONE OF HIS MOST POWERFUL SHORT STORIES. THE GRIM SITUATION IS RELIEVED BY THE TREMENDOUS SATIRE THAT UNDERLIES THE TALE. "PRAYER" IS A STORY TO BE READ AND RE-READ MANY TIMES.

MELVILLE CHATER

HAS NOT HITHERTO BEEN A CONTRIBUTOR TO THESE PAGES, BUT HIS NAME HAS LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH BRIGHT AND CLEVER FICTION. HE HAS IN PREPARATION A SERIES OF BRIDGE WHIST STORIES WHICH WILL DOUBTLESS MAKE A WIDE APPEAL, AND PROVE AS POPULAR AS HIS "STORIES OF MANHATTAN."

FEW YOUNG WRITERS ARE AS
VERSATILE AS

**INEZ HAYNES
GILLMORE**

LAST MONTH WE PUBLISHED A GRUESOME BIT FROM HER PEN CALLED "IN THE DARK"; IN THIS NUMBER SHE IS REPRESENTED BY A STORY ENTIRELY DIFFERENT IN CHARACTER—ONE OF HER ROLICKING, REFRESHINGLY YOUTHFUL TALES WHICH EVERYONE WILL WANT TO READ. "THE AMATEUR HOUSE-PARTY" IS FRANKLY RIDICULOUS AND IRRESISTIBLY FUNNY.



MELVILLE CHATER



INEZ HAYNES GILLMORE

ARTHUR STRINGER

WHOSE "WIRE-TAPPERS" SERIES MADE SUCH AN IMPRESSION WHEN THEY ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THESE PAGES, IS TOO WELL KNOWN TO OUR READERS TO REQUIRE AN INTRODUCTION. "LOCKED HORNS" IS REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS BEST WORK; AND IT WILL BE GOOD NEWS TO THOSE WHO HAVE FOLLOWED MR. STRINGER'S STORIES TO LEARN THAT HE IS ENGAGED UPON A NOVEL OF STAGE LIFE WHICH WILL APPEAR IN THE SMART SET DURING THE AUTUMN. IN THE MEANTIME, MANY OF HIS POEMS WILL BE PRINTED FROM TIME TO TIME.



ARTHUR STRINGER



EMMA WOLF

EMMA WOLF

WROTE "THE CONFLICT," A NOVELETTE PUBLISHED LESS THAN A YEAR AGO, WHICH OUR READERS STILL SPEAK OF. EVERYTHING FROM HER PEN CONTAINS A NOTE OF DISTINCTION, AND THIS QUALITY IS PARTICULARLY APPARENT IN "LOUIS D'OR"—THE STORY OF A LOVABLE VAGABOND WHO, DESPITE HIS FAILINGS, REMAINED A GENTLEMAN TO THE END. MISS WOLF IS LIKEWISE AT WORK UPON A LONG STORY FOR US WHICH SHE HOPES TO COMPLETE IN THE FALL.

LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

THE AUTHOR OF "THE BRASS BOWL" AND MANY OTHER SUCCESSFUL NOVELS, CONTRIBUTES HIS FIRST STORY TO THIS MAGAZINE. "AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR" IS HIGHLY MELODRAMATIC, BUT IT NEVER STEPS OVER THE BORDER OF PROBABILITY; NO READER WILL FAIL TO ENJOY ITS THRILLING SITUATION.

CECIL CARLISLE PANGMAN

IS A YOUNG CANADIAN WHO HAS FREQUENTLY WRITTEN FOR THE SMART SET. HIS STORIES AROUND IN HUMOR AND HAVE THAT LIGHT-HEARTED FLAVOR WHICH GIVES THEM UNUSUAL CHARM. "CONCERNING THE GOVERNESS" WILL BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER STORIES EQUALLY ENTERTAINING.



LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE



CECIL CARLISLE PANGMAN

AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE

for August

ROBERT HICHENS

began his new story of the desert

"BARBARY SHEEP"

in the July number of

AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE

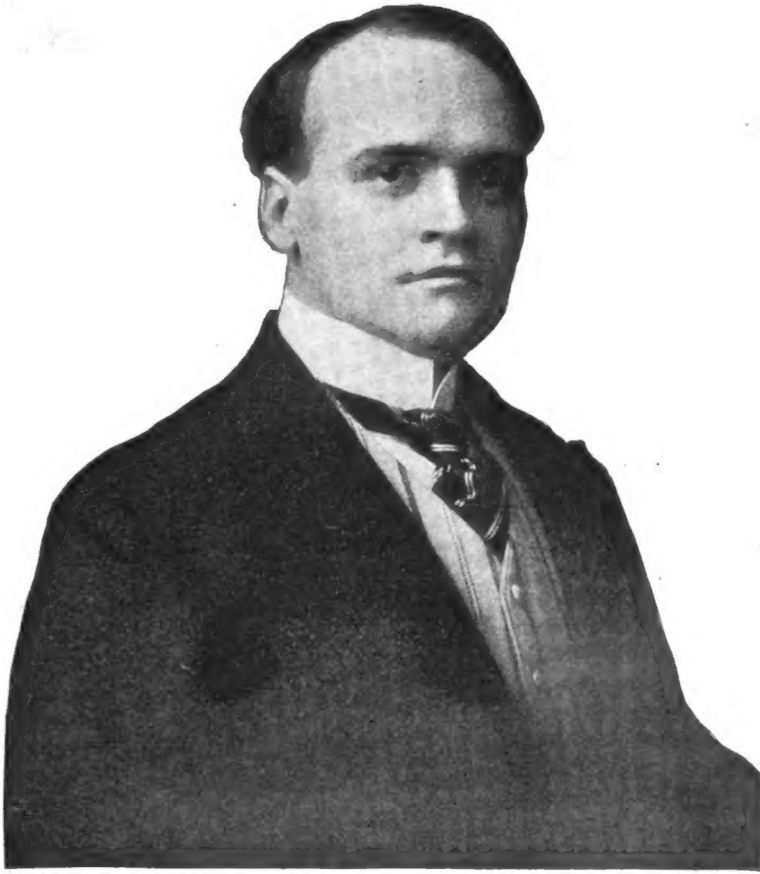
The impression made by the opening chapter demonstrated beyond question that the author of "THE GARDEN OF ALLAH" has wonderfully strengthened his hold upon the affection of American readers. Inquiries about "BARBARY SHEEP" are coming from all over the country, and the unanimous opinion of readers indicates that the story will be a record-breaker. The August number will contain the second instalment, and readers of it will find that the interest develops to an extraordinary degree.

Copies will be on sale July 15th, and it will be wise to remember to secure the magazine promptly.

Price 15c. a copy

Subscription \$1.80 a year

AINSLEE MAGAZINE COMPANY, NEW YORK

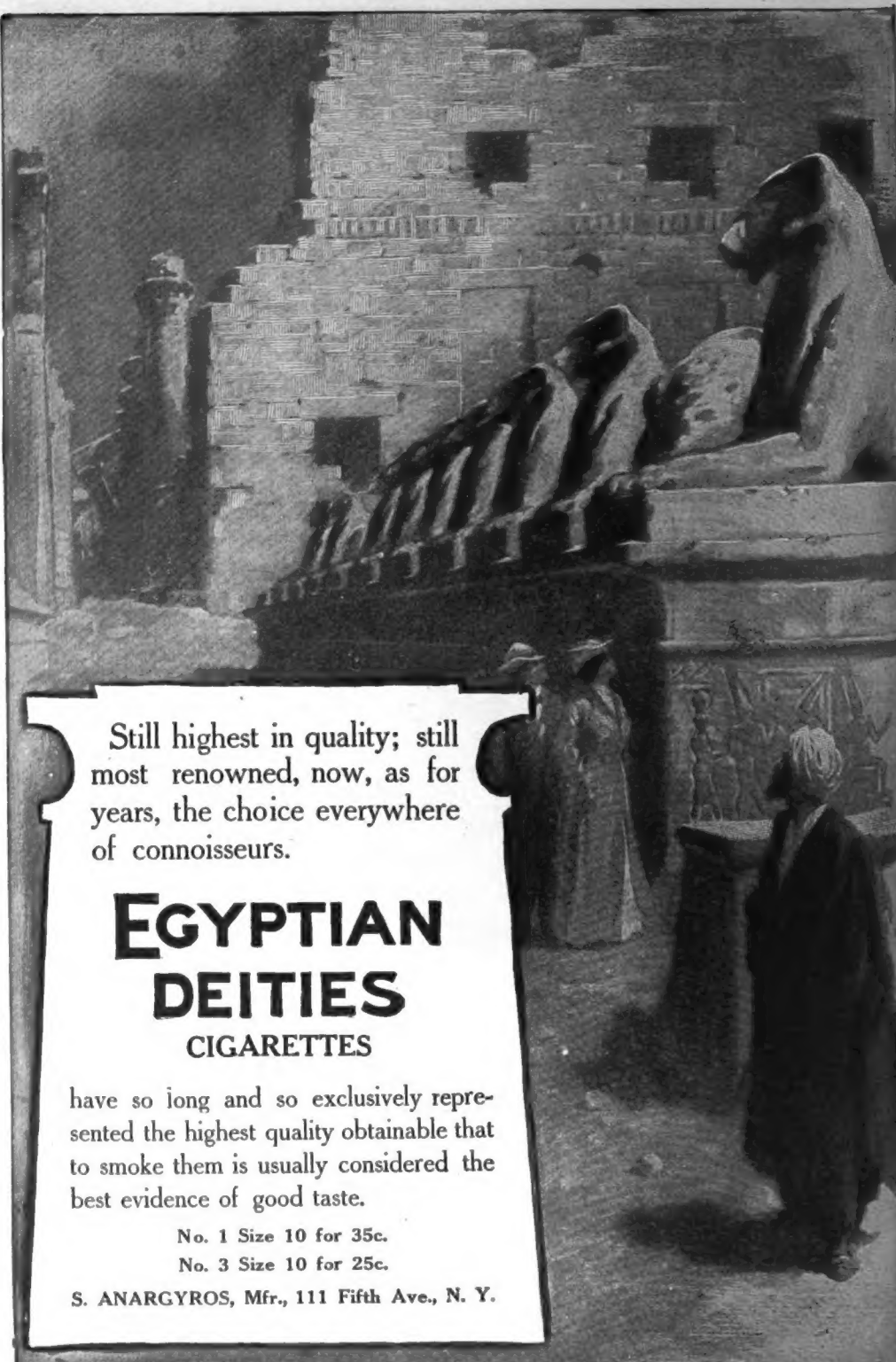


*The Author of the Best
Selling Book in America*

LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

Mr. Louis Joseph Vance was practically unknown until the publication of "The Brass Bowl," which has brought him into fame as the author of the most exciting romance of the year.

"A marvel of ingenuity, a world of curious, amusing and thrilling adventures."
—*Chicago Daily News*. "Keeps the reader in a furor of expectation."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*. "No resting places in this story of fast and furious action."—*Detroit Times*. "Vivid in the ever-changing play of cumulative events and exciting developments."—*Chicago Record-Herald*. "Commended for sheer delight of mystery, romance and exciting ventures."—*Newark Call*.



Still highest in quality; still most renowned, now, as for years, the choice everywhere of connoisseurs.

EGYPTIAN DEITIES CIGARETTES

have so long and so exclusively represented the highest quality obtainable that to smoke them is usually considered the best evidence of good taste.

No. 1 Size 10 for 35c.

No. 3 Size 10 for 25c.

S. ANARGYROS, Mfr., 111 Fifth Ave., N. Y.

COPYRIGHT, 1906, S. ANARGYROS

Egyptian Scenes—Avenue of Ram-headed Sphinxes at Luxor.

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. XXII

AUGUST, 1907

No. 4

CONTENTS

Mrs Clevenger	Grace Eleanore Towndrow	1
Prayer	Maarten Maartens	48
The Ingratitude of Ernest	Melville Chater	55
Lyric Life	Edith M. Thomas	63
A Savior of Souls	Katharine Metcalf Roof	64
Dim Hours of Dusk	Sinclair Lewis	72
The Shepherdess	Archibald Sullivan	73
Paying the Price	Christian Reid	74
Recognition	John G. Neihardt	86
The Amateur House-Party	Inez Haynes Gillmore	87
Louis d'Or	Emma Wolf	94
Sphinxes Without Secrets	Richard Duffy	105
The Comforting	Owen R. Washburn	109
Chums	Arthur Stanley Wheeler	110
At the Eleventh Hour	Louis Joseph Vance	115
Approach	Margaret Sherwood	126
Concerning the Governess	Cecil Carlisle Pangman	127
Locked Horns	Arthur Stringer	139
Unwelcomed Eloquence	Mary Hinman Paine	143
The Skeleton Stalks Forth	William Hamilton Osborne	144
La Jolie Femme	Pierre Veber	151
The First Reader and the Fourth Alarm	Robert Rudd Whiting	154
Æs Triplex	Harris Merton Lyon	160

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$2.50

SINGLE COPIES 25 CENTS

*The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright, and must not be reprinted
Entered at New York Post-Office as second-class mail matter
Issued monthly by Ess Ess Publishing Company, 452 Fifth Avenue, New York*

Lord & Taylor

Wholesale Distributors

"Onyx"



Hosiery

LOOK FOR THIS

TRADE MARK

STAMPED ON EVERY PAIR

This excellent brand of Hosiery has achieved its splendid success entirely through *quality*. It has fulfilled every claim made for it. We want the public to learn and know this brand so well that the moment a question of Hosiery arises they will say instinctively, "ONYX" HOSIERY IS THE BEST.

We want the public to feel that they can purchase any number of "ONYX" Hosiery advertised with implicit confidence. Remember also that you can get any Hosiery requirement for Men, Women or Children in the "ONYX" Brand.

Here is an opportunity to get in touch with a

SUPERIOR, SERVICEABLE, SATISFACTORY SILK HOSE

at a reasonable price: \$2.25 a pair—

No. 106.—*Pure Dye Silk Hose*

obtainable in a broad range of colors, including the latest demand of fashion; it is possible to match any fabric or leather. This number has the merit of being unusually strong, yet knit of finest threads of pure silk; elastic re-inforced sole, heel and toe. Sold at all responsible shops; *look for trade mark as shown above*—stamped on every pair—a guarantee of quality and protection against spurious imitations. If you cannot procure at your dealers', write to Department 7 and we will direct you to nearest dealer, or we will mail postpaid a pair of any color on receipt of price—\$2.25.

Broadway

New York

MRS. CLEVENGER

By Grace Eleanore Towndrow

I

MRS. CLEVENGER

THE wide veranda, with its trailing plants, wicker furniture and grass-matting rugs, looked shady and cool, while the beach below glared white in the July sunlight.

In a hammock swung where the vines clustered thickest Burton Walmsley stretched his lean length, and with hat tipped over his eyes gazed dreamily out over the sunlit water.

It was that part of the day—early afternoon—when all things seem to rest. The beach was deserted save for a few white-capped nursemaids and their bare-legged, sunbrowned charges. Within the cottage all was silent, and Walmsley concluded that its inmates, like himself, had fallen under the drowsy spell of midday. A delicious breeze drifted in from the sea, stirring the hammock fringes and waving the tendrils of the vines. The man in the hammock lifted his hat and allowed it to sweep caressingly across his face. It fanned his eyelids down and he almost slept. Then a shuffling sound, like that of soft, heavy footfalls on a hard floor, fell on his ear, and he glanced up a little resentfully.

The big form of his cousin, Bob Hargrave, filled the doorway. He was attired in rather soiled *négligée* of linen trousers and pink shirt; a tiny linen cap set far back on his head displayed a fringe of blond-gray hair which waved above a face as plump and smooth as an infant's. In one hand he carried a bottle, in another a pail of ice from which a siphon protruded, and the

pockets of his baggy trousers bulged suspiciously.

"Come on, Burt, and have something," he called in cheery invitation.

"Where?" demanded Walmsley sleepily.

"Down on the 'Plat.' There's a fine breeze down there."

A flight of steps cut in the face of the rock led to a sort of plateau, which broke the descent midway to the beach, and down these steps Hargrave cautiously took his way, carrying the pail and bottle carefully. Walmsley extricated himself slowly from the hammock and followed his cousin rather reluctantly.

Hargrave deposited his burden on the rock, and seating himself on the edge of the lowest step looked about with an air of satisfaction.

"There! This is a pretty good place for a drink. Eh?"

"I guess any old place is good enough for that," remarked Walmsley. "Perhaps a little too sunny?" squinting and drawing his hat forward to shield his eyes.

"Oh, I don't know." Hargrave looked rather dubiously at the stunted, twisted pine growing out of a crevice in the rocks. "That tree throws quite a little shade, and the view's beautiful."

"Now, look here, Bob; you've a mighty sleek, innocent appearance, but you can't deceive me. Do you mean to say that you've enticed me from the shady veranda, where I was cool and happy, to this sun-baked point of rock simply to look at the view?"

"Oh—er—not exactly. Why, don't you like it? Have a drink, old man."

He produced two small glasses from

his capacious pockets, and proceeded to fill them gravely, with contemplative enjoyment.

A moment later Walmsley set down his empty glass and stretched his long limbs lazily.

"Now fire away, Bob," he said, dodging until he brought the gnarled tree-trunk between his eyes and the glare on the water. "I know you've got something to say to me, and have a sneaking suspicion that it's not just pleasant."

"You're right, old man. I *have* got something to say, and I hate like the mischief to say it. It's—it's about Virginia!"

"Ah!" The tone was mildly interrogative. Walmsley raised himself on his elbow, fumbled for his cigarette-case and passed it to his cousin.

Hargrave selected a smoke, and then, with the air of a child postponing a disagreeable task, proposed a stroll on the beach. Walmsley rose reluctantly.

It was hard to refuse this middle-aged boy anything he asked, especially at the present moment, when a cloud of perplexity, which seemed a misfit, sat upon his infantile brow. So Walmsley followed him down the wooden steps which led to the beach below, past the cottages perched on the edge of the cliff, to where they were fewer and farther apart and finally ceased to be.

At the farthest point of the horse-shoe-shaped beach was a sheltered cove, where a lot of loose boulders, broken away from the rocks above by the Winter storms, were scattered about on the hard white sand. Toward this cove Hargrave silently led the way. He seated himself cautiously on the edge of a low rock, resting a pudgy hand on either knee. Walmsley, lean and supple in spite of his broad shoulders, stretched his length on the sand, while he lazily flipped a handful of pebbles into the water one by one.

"Now, old man, open your heart. What's worrying you?" He glanced kindly at the pink, perturbed face above him, but Hargrave avoided his glance.

"I hardly know how to begin, Burt,

but Betty insists that I have a word with you about Virginia."

"But I don't know the child."

"But you will, and she isn't a child any more. That's the trouble—she's grown up now, and grown very pretty."

"Well, she won't be the first pretty girl I've met."

"No; and she won't be the first you've made love to," grinned Hargrave.

"What kind of a reputation are you trying to give me?" demanded Walmsley, rousing himself aggressively.

"Oh, you've won it fairly enough, and that's what's worrying Betty. You see, Virginia has been kept pretty close at school and college, and knows nothing of the world. She is young, pretty and impressionable—has high ideals and—er—all that. She is coming to us from Wellesley, and will stop over a while on her way South. You know she is the only child of Betty's only cousin, and young enough to be our daughter. Betty feels the responsibility of having a young and pretty girl on her hands all Summer, so she wanted me to say—to ask you—oh, hang it, I don't know just how to come to the point, but—you're a damned good-looking fellow, Burt, and can make yourself very agreeable when you want. Yes, you needn't grin, you monkey; you know it—none better. Well, Betty wanted me to drop you a hint—in a casual way, you know—not to make yourself *too* agreeable to Virginia while she's here, because girls of her age are so—well, as I said before, impressionable, and she might take you seriously, and—and—oh, hang it, you know what I mean."

Walmsley continued to flip pebbles into the sea for a moment without speaking, and Hargrave scanned his face anxiously.

"Your hint is most delicately veiled, Bob," he said at length, "but I think I understand. I am to make myself disagreeable to this young person with the high ideals and 'all that,' lest she succumb to my marvelous fascination. But what I don't understand is," a trifle indignantly, "what harm would result if the young lady should be so

short-sighted as to care for me? What objection has Betty to me as a cousin-in-law on her side of the house, when she has already accepted me in that relationship from your side? I always thought Betty a pretty good friend of mine."

"So she is. She has no objection to you personally, Burt. She just about swears by you as a cousin, but you know, you are not a marrying man. You have always preferred the society of married women to young girls. I don't blame you myself—they don't expect so much of one, but Betty has old-fashioned notions, and—there's Mrs. Clevenger."

A tiny pebble struck Walmsley neatly behind the ear. "Yes, there's Mrs. Clevenger," he said quietly, as a merry, infectious laugh rippled out from above their heads.

"Did I hurt you? I didn't know I was such a good shot."

Both men glanced up to see a red-turbaned head and a laughing face projected over the cliff. Behind the head a pair of shapely limbs, scarlet-clad and shod for bathing, waved against the sky line. The body to which these members belonged was not visible, as its owner was lying prone on the ground, peering over the edge of the rock.

How much of their conversation had she heard? She met Bob's astonished stare with the mischievous grin of a gamin. Her teeth were superb.

"Lazy men! Why aren't you in the water?" she asked.

"We might retaliate by asking the same question," said Walmsley, rising and baring his head.

Mrs. Clevenger also rose to a sitting position and embraced her knees.

"I can't find anyone to go in with me," she said. "I asked Betty, but she's deep in a new book, and would hardly take her nose out of it long enough to speak to me. I saw you coming down the beach as I came out of the bath-house, and marked you for my prey. I followed you along the 'Cliff Walk.' I hated to interrupt that serious conversation—you looked as solemn as a pair of owls on a bough—but time is

flying, and the tide is going out. Don't dare refuse."

She laughed again, and Bob laughed with her, his chubby face beaming. There was a boyish charm in her freedom of gesture and manner which was irresistible. She scrambled gaily down the steep incline, and, quite unembarrassed by her scanty costume, walked between the gentlemen back along the beach in the direction of the bath-houses. Their route lay past Bluff Cottage, and on the veranda Mrs. Hargrave lounged in a steamer-chair, apparently absorbed in a book. Mrs. Clevenger called up to her joyously:

"Come in, Betty. You're wasting time."

Mrs. Hargrave glanced up from her book and surveyed the trio calmly. Something in her glance caused Bobbie to squirm uneasily, although his smile remained cheerful.

"Did you think of going into the water, Robert?" She spoke in an even, detached sort of tone.

"Yes; it looks awfully enticing. Aren't you coming in?"

"No, I think not. And I must remind you that I expect Virginia on the 5.35 train, and would like you to drive over to meet her."

"All right, Betty; I'll be on deck. It's only three o'clock."

Mrs. Clevenger was on the raft when Mr. Hargrave and his cousin emerged from the bath-houses. She had made acquaintance with several small boys and was urging them to perform tricks. They had evidently adopted her as one of themselves, and with boyish enthusiasm were showing off their most daring "stunts" for her admiration. They looked a little sheepish when the men climbed on the raft, then inclined to resent the intrusion. Mrs. Clevenger, however, calmly ignored their presence.

"Can you make a running dive?" she asked the boys, dazzling them with her wide smile, "clear from the other end of the float, and then leap out as far as you can go?"

One thought he could; another was doubtful.

"This way," she said, walking slowly backward to the near edge of the raft. She paused for a moment, lightly poised with upraised arms, while the boys watched her intently. Then she darted past them. There was a swirling flash of scarlet as she leaped into the air, striking the water with rigid arms and cleaving it like a knife.

When she came to the surface her red kerchief, loosened by contact with the water, floated at some distance from her. She swam after it, laughing, and her long hair, freed from the confining cap, clung to her face and coiled about her neck.

Wet, clinging hair and dripping garments do not, as a rule, add to a woman's appearance, and Sally Clevenger laid small claim to beauty, yet when she climbed upon the raft, shaking her head like a wet spaniel, the boys, small and big, gathered around, mute and admiring. She was such a picture of bounding health and vigor, so full of jolly animal spirits, and her smile was brimming with mischief.

"Now, boys, you try it," she commanded, "one—two—three—go!" And six sturdy brown legs twinkled across the float and disappeared.

"Let's try the springboard," she said, as the youngsters came scrambling up, panting and blowing. "You may come into this game," turning graciously to the gentlemen, and they accepted the permission gravely.

"Take your places according to height. Mr. Walmsley, you go first, because you are the tallest—Mr. Hargrave next—then you, and you, and you."

She placed them rapidly, right-about-face in order, then stood off and surveyed her little company critically.

"That will do. Now," skipping to the head of the line, "follow me."

Like a flash she ran up the springboard and took a flying, headlong leap. Walmsley followed, then Hargrave. The boys, anxious not to be outdone, jostled and pushed one another, and plunged in wildly.

"Make for that point of rock off yonder," said Mrs. Clevenger to Walmsley, who had come up close beside her.

"The boys won't be able to make that distance," he replied.

"I don't expect them to, silly," she flashed mischievously, and struck out with a long, overhand stroke. She climbed up the jagged face of the rock, and seating herself on its topmost ledge, calmly watched the youngsters in their frantic struggles to follow her. One by one they dropped out of the race and made for the beach.

"That was rather a shabby trick," said Bobbie, who had come in a close third.

"I know. It's a shame, poor little beggars! But I was awfully tired of them."

"Why did you make friends with them?" asked Walmsley.

"Oh, I got awfully bored waiting for you to come out, and I was just crazy for a dive, but when I swam over to the raft the boys were there first and seemed to think I was intruding. So I simply had to make friends with them to hold my place."

"Is that the way you treat your friends when you tire of them?" asked Walmsley in a low tone.

"Some of my friends don't tire me," she answered, with a subtle smile.

"I think they are saying things about you," said Bobbie, indicating the group of excited youngsters on the shore. Judging by their gestures they were discussing the matter rather warmly.

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Clevenger calmly. "They'll think I'm the most wonderful being they ever met, and be ashamed to look me in the face because they were unable to follow my lead. Each one is blaming the other. Do you see that gesture? That means 'Coward!' and that 'Cold feet!' I hope they won't come to blows."

Mrs. Clevenger plucked the seaweed from the rocks to weave a chaplet for Bobbie's brow, placing it accurately and artistically to encircle his baldness like a halo. She snapped the little air cells of the weed, laughing gleefully at each loud report. Then she discovered a breakwater at some distance, which seemed to offer good diving facilities, and challenged the men to

swim out to it. There she put them through a course of "stunts" somewhat similar to those she had planned for the boys.

When at last she tired of this diversion they swam back to the shore, and she proposed that they walk along the beach to the bath-houses.

"Betty seems to have company," remarked Mrs. Clevenger, as they came within sight of the cottage.

A tall girl, in a gray traveling-suit, with a loose veil blowing about her face, leaned from the piazza and waved her hand in their direction.

"Great Scott, it's Virginia!" cried Bobbie, in consternation. "I forgot all about her!"

II

MRS. HARGRAVE EXPRESSES HER OPINION

VIRGINIA HASBROUCK was sitting on the rocks just below the piazza of Bluff Cottage, writing letters. That is, she had been writing, but the pad now lay on her knee, an unfinished letter between its leaves, and with her elbow propped upon it and her chin nestled in the hollow of her hand she basked lazily in the sunlight.

She was gowned coolly and becomingly in white linen and white canvas shoes, but the crowning glory of her costume was a pink sunbonnet, ruffled and tilted coquettishly, which rested on her dark hair, and made her exquisite complexion appear even more delicately tinted.

In a wicker chair on the piazza above, with a heap of gay pillows behind her back, Betty Hargrave was reclining and reading. On the sands below a few early bathers had already congregated, and Miss Hasbrouck was trying to decide whether she cared to make the exertion to go into the water or not. But even the effort to think about it was more than she cared to make at the present moment, so she allowed the thought to drift from her mind with others that seemed just to

peep in, grow dim and hazy, and then float softly away. She was in that delicious state of semi-coma produced by the soothing influences of the sun, the wind and the sea, when even thought seems to cease, and one is at perfect rest, and peaceful beyond utterance.

She heard as in a dream the soft swish, swish of the curling waves upon the shingle, the voices and laughter of children at play. The glare of the sunlight, softened though it was by the shade of the pink sunbonnet, beat upon her eyelids, weighing them down until she viewed the scene through a veil of silken lashes.

Then, suddenly, from the further curve of the horseshoe-shaped beach, but within range of her hazy vision, two figures seemed to come out of the distance, prominent against the yellow sand and gray rocks which formed their background.

For some reason, unknown to herself at the time, these two figures interested Miss Hasbrouck. The sleep left her eyes, and she sat up and took notice. She saw that they—a man and a woman—were dressed for bathing; that the man was big and stalwart, the woman slender and girlish in appearance, and wore her hair hanging loosely over her shoulders.

They strolled leisurely along, hand in hand, and Miss Hasbrouck noticed that some of the bathers turned and looked curiously after them when they had passed. As they came nearer, she gave a little start.

The man was Burton Walmsley, his companion Mrs. Clevenger.

Virginia sat quite still for a moment; then, "Cousin Betty!" she called, "why don't you come out here?"

Mrs. Hargrave lifted her head from among the pillows.

"I think it is more comfortable on the piazza, dear."

"Easy-chairs and pillows are for people without any backbone; at least that is what they used to tell us at school. Come down here, and you'll be surprised to find how comfortable a rock can be."

Mrs. Hargrave came reluctantly, climbing cautiously down the steps, and seated herself beside her cousin. "Isn't the sun very glaring?" she asked, shading her eyes and wrinkling her nose.

"It's delicious!" protested Virginia, lifting the pink sunbonnet from her head and transferring it to her cousin's and turning her face recklessly to the sun's warm glow.

"Oh, you foolish child! You will ruin your complexion."

"That's just what I want. I'm ashamed of its pinky-whiteness. I'd like to have a splendid, healthy tan like Mrs. Clevenger's."

Something in the name brought Betty's gaze from the blue expanse before them to the yellow beach below, and a second later riveted it on the two figures that had claimed Miss Hasbrouck's attention a few minutes before.

"Well!" ejaculated Mrs. Hargrave, sitting up very erect, "well, I *never!*"

Mrs. Clevenger and her companion were swinging their clasped hands between them, like a pair of happy children, careless of onlookers. It was unfortunate that she should choose the very moment when Mrs. Hargrave's eyes were upon her to pirouette airily, her short skirt whirling out like a dervish's; then, with her hand still clasped in Walmsley's, she swirled beneath his arm, finishing with a couple of dainty dancing steps.

"Oh, that woman!" groaned Mrs. Hargrave.

"Is Mrs. Clevenger a widow?" asked Miss Hasbrouck, who had watched the performance gravely.

"No; there is a Mr. Clevenger."

"Then why does she act that way?"

Mrs. Hargrave pursed her lips and shrugged slightly.

"Where is he, Cousin Betty?" persisted Virginia.

"I believe he is in the city at present. His business won't permit him to come to the beach except occasionally. He has no motor, and his wife says he does not like commuting."

"But—but—" There was a puz-

zled look in Virginia's big gray eyes. "Doesn't he mind the way she acts—that is, being so friendly with Mr. Walmsley? She is with him all the time."

"I don't know. I can't imagine what Mr. Clevenger is thinking about. I have old-fashioned notions about those things, and you know nothing of the world yet. But you may as well open your eyes now, for you will see enough to make you pop-eyed if Mrs. Clevenger stays at Pine Bluff all Summer."

"I met her last Fall, while Burton was on a hunting trip in Canada. I thought her one of the brightest, most entertaining little women—and she is still; no one can dispute Sally Clevenger's power to entertain. But as soon as Burton returned for the holidays she made such a dead set at him that I lost all fondness for her."

Miss Hasbrouck's face became a little hard as she listened.

"Don't you think Mr. Walmsley is equally to blame? A man can always get out of a woman's way if he wishes to."

"You don't know Sally Clevenger. Wait! I am not trying to exonerate Burton Walmsley by any means. He has generally preferred to pay his attentions to married women—most single men do nowadays," she explained in answer to Virginia's look of wonder. "But he has never made himself so conspicuous before. No man escapes if Mrs. Clevenger makes up her mind to have or to hold him. Look at poor Bobbie's plight the day you arrived!"

"She must be a fascinating woman to make even Bobbie forget me. Oh, yes, he did; he told me so himself, in his innocent, blundering way. He said they were having such a good time in the water that he completely forgot the time."

The subjects of their conversation were now directly beneath them on the beach. Mrs. Clevenger looked up and twirled her red bathing cap, which she carried in her hand.

"Hey, Betty," called Mr. Walmsley, "won't you and Miss Hasbrouck come

for a trip in the *Cyclone*? We can 'shoot' up to Tilton and back before lunch."

"I think not, Burt," answered Mrs. Hargrave hesitatingly. "Bobbie is going to bring some people home to lunch, and I would not like to be away when they arrive. Would you like to go, Virginia?" in a lower tone, turning to Miss Hasbrouck.

"Yes—that is—just as you say. Shall I?"

But no further invitation was extended from the twain below. Mr. Walmsley accepted Mrs. Hargrave's refusal with a cheery "All right," and Mrs. Clevenger, with a farewell flip of the red bandanna, stepped into a row-boat, and Burton pushed it down the beach with a powerful shove, and clambered in after her.

Virginia's cheeks burned hot at the slight, and tears of mortification came into her eyes. She turned them steadily away from Betty and watched the figures in the boat with a vision blurred and distorted. Betty also watched them as they climbed over the side of the motor boat lying at anchor in the bay.

After a few preliminary snorts the long, slim body turned lithely, and, gathering speed, headed toward Tilton, Mrs. Clevenger's red kerchief, which she had tied over her floating hair, becoming a mere speck against the blue.

"Well, I *never!*" ejaculated Mrs. Hargrave for the second time that morning. She turned and faced Virginia squarely, but pretended not to see the tears that still trembled on her lashes.

Then a flash of memory cleared Mrs. Hargrave's mental vision. "Oh, well," she consoled herself a trifle uneasily, "he might at least be polite."

III

IN THE LANTERN'S LIGHT

BLUFF COTTAGE was in festal array. Lights glowed from every window, and

little fat-bellied Japanese lanterns—rose-pink, turquoise-blue and apple-green—adorned the piazza, and even swung from the branches of the scrub pines growing among the rocks.

"I do wish the wind wouldn't blow," lamented Betty, as the lanterns began to bob about merrily. "They'll all be burned up before the folks get here."

"And if there is no breeze, the folks will wonder why we stay in such an uncomfortable place."

"Why, Robert! You know it is *always* cool here."

"Yes; I know it, and you know it, but we won't be able to convince them of it."

Mrs. Hargrave was giving a house-warming—a "party" her husband persisted in calling it, contending that their rather close quarters required no other than atmospheric aid to keep the temperature at more than the required height.

The guests invited were mostly school friends of Virginia's, their men friends, and a few matrons to act as chaperons. They were expected to arrive on the 8.29 train, and it had been arranged that Mr. Hargrave was to go over to the station with a big car and bring as many as he could stow in it, and Burton had hired a 'bus from the village livery for the younger set.

Twilight, soft and velvety, had fallen. Out of the sea rose the July moon, red and stealthy. Across its face the scrub pine threw a single black arm, holding a swinging, lighted lantern.

"Oh, look!" cried Virginia softly, "isn't that just like a picture on a Japanese fan? If you can spare me, Betty—is everything ready?—I am going down there to sit under that lantern and moon a while."

"Run along, dearie—yes, it's very pretty. Thomas, have the ices arrived?"

Down on the rocks the light of the rose-colored lantern paled as the light of the moon waxed strong. Virginia sat with her back resting against the twisted trunk of the pine, her hands clasped lightly in her lap, her mind

attuned to nature's calm. A path of gold stretched across the bay to the black rocks at her feet. Tiny waves, jewel-tipped, tossed up by the light breeze, broke and scattered their wealth at the base of the cliff.

Burton Walmsley, handsome and immaculate in white flannels, swung lightly down the stone steps and stood beside her.

"This looks like enchanted ground," he said. "May I intrude?"

"Yes, if you will promise not to break the spell," speaking softly. "Isn't the silence exquisite?"

"Which means that you don't wish me to talk, but I'm going to. I have a proposition to make: I'm going over to the station with Bob in the machine; the 'bus will meet me there and I'll drive back with the young people. I thought it might be jolly if you'd go over with us and meet your friends at the station."

"That would be pleasant," said Virginia, her eyes sparkling. "I should like to go if Cousin Betty could spare me."

"Burt! Burton!" A shrill voice penetrated the silence. There was a tapping of high heels on the rock above them, and Mrs. Clevenger in a swirl of fluffy draperies bore down upon them.

Walmsley rose quietly and extended his hand to assist her down the steps.

"What an ideal spot!" she exclaimed breathlessly; "I never saw it before in the moonlight. I hurried so—I was afraid you would get away before I reached here. Will you take me over to the station in the car? Betty says Mrs. Corwin is coming tonight, and I'm so anxious to see her—thought I would have a chance to talk with her on the way over."

"Shall be delighted," said Walmsley quietly. "I have just asked Miss Hasbrouck to go over with us to meet her friends."

"Oh!" There was a shade of disappointment in her tone that Mrs. Clevenger tried to conceal. "That will be charming!"

"I don't think I shall be able to go," said Miss Hasbrouck a trifle frigidly.

"Betty will want my assistance in receiving her guests."

"It is such an informal affair that I don't believe she would mind, but you know best," murmured Mrs. Clevenger, moving toward the cottage.

"I hope you will come with us, Miss Hasbrouck," said Walmsley, turning to Virginia.

"No, I think not," she answered. "I would really prefer to remain here until the folks arrive."

Mrs. Hargrave joined Virginia shortly after the departure of the car for the station. She had heard Mrs. Clevenger's laugh as she drove away with the men, and was curious.

"What brought her over so early?" she asked.

Virginia explained.

"Simply an excuse, my dear, to ride over with Burton. I am quite satisfied that her anxiety to see Mrs. Corwin is not very deep. What did she wear?"

"I hardly noticed—something white and thin, and a long white cloak."

"Thank heaven, she didn't wear her bathing-suit. Oh, you may laugh, but that woman is capable of anything."

The tooting of the auto horn, and the sound of laughter, soon announced the arrival of the first instalment of their guests. In the midst of the greetings which followed Mrs. Hargrave seized upon a big blond woman.

"Amelia Corwin! How glad I am to see you! Where is Mrs. Clevenger? She went over especially to meet you."

"I guess not," brusquely retorted Mrs. Corwin. "You'll never find Sally Clevenger among the chaperons. She is driving the stage of young folks. Yes, I said *driving*! She attempted to race with the automobile at first. I fancy those poor livery horses were never so surprised in their lives. My! What a pretty place you have here! Isn't that view sublime!"

But even as they exclaimed over the view and the moonlight, they heard in the distance the clatter of hoofs, the rattle of wheels, feminine shrieks and masculine laughter. Then they saw the stage coming down the road, rocking and pitching from side to side. As

it neared the cottage it made a perilously close turn through the gates, and drew up, with a grand flourish and plunging of hoofs, before the crowd gathered on the steps.

Mrs. Clevenger was on the box beside Burton Walmsley. She was driving, the loose sleeves of her cloak turned back from her bare white arms, her fair hair blowing about her flushed face. She flung the reins to the liveryman, who had been clinging grimly to the back step, and stood up, all a-sparkle with excitement and mischief, awaiting the plaudits of her passengers.

Walmsley assisted her to alight and she was immediately surrounded by a laughing group, congratulating her on her horsemanship and themselves on their safe passage.

Virginia's school friends rushed upon her with a burst of girlish reproaches.

"Oh, you Meanest of All! Why didn't you come over to meet us?"

"You missed half your life! It was the most thrilling ride I ever experienced. We were all packed in there in the dark—didn't know who was who—and then tossed around like footballs. One moment I was on one man's lap, and the next flung over to someone opposite. Oh, it was exciting, I assure you! Good thing the chap-erons were not with us."

"I am so thankful to escape without any broken bones that I won't complain about a little thing like this," said Helen Goodwin, exhibiting a yard or more of torn flouncing.

Mrs. Hargrave had relied largely upon the moonlight to furnish entertainment for her young guests. Water motoring by moonlight, canoeing by moonlight, moon-gazing on the rocks—could young people ask for more? They could dance if they chose on the wide piazza; she had concealed some musicians among the shrubbery, but she knew too well the apathy of the average Summer man in regard to this form of exercise to depend upon it for entertainment.

While Virginia was endeavoring to arrange a congenial party for the first trip in the motor boat, Mrs. Clevenger

detached herself from a circle of square-shouldered college men, upon whom she had been bestowing her wide, brilliant smiles, and approached her.

"Who is that blond giant glowering over there in the corner?" she asked.

Virginia looked in the direction indicated. "That's Philip Gordon—Harvard '04."

"He seems to be unattached and looks lonely. I think I would like him to row me in the moonlight. Judging by his shoulders he ought to be able to pull a good stroke."

"His stroke is all right, but he is not unattached. He belongs to Helen Goodwin."

"Oh, I don't mind that, so long as he can row. Present him, please."

Five minutes later Philip Gordon, transformed from a rather sullen boy, sulking in a corner, to an eager, smiling cavalier, flattered by the preference shown him, led Mrs. Clevenger triumphantly away in the direction of the boat landing.

It was so wonderful that she had singled him out, known at a glance, as she said, that he was an oarsman, and just when he was beginning to feel so awfully bored. He hated to listen to a lot of girls chatter, and Helen was as bad as the rest when she got in a crowd. But this woman was different. She had a way with her that made a fellow feel as if he were particularly "IT" in capitals.

She did not talk very much at first. In fact, they went too fast for conversation. He wanted to prove to her that her faith in him as an oarsman had not been misplaced. So she just leaned back in the boat-chair and guided the tiller ropes, her eyes shining with admiration of his wonderful stroke. They made Tilton in 9.7. But they came back more slowly, very slowly, in fact, and she leaned forward and listened while he talked of himself—it was marvelous what an interest she took in a fellow. And when she talked he hardly remembered what she said, but she was different from any girl he had ever met. She made him laugh, was jolly and amusing without being

clever. He concluded that he liked women—married women—better than girls, and was a little sorry that he had engaged himself so young.

Supper was served by a caterer from town at cozy little tables on the lantern-lit piazza. Mrs. Clevenger, attended by the infatuated Gordon, with Walmsley lazily following, found a table in a shaded corner.

"Go and find someone to fill up the table," commanded Mrs. Clevenger, putting out a detaining hand as Walmsley was about to take his seat, "someone that won't be a wet blanket."

"Why take such awful risks?" asked Walmsley. "These round tables should never seat more than three."

"Or two," suggested Gordon. Walmsley fixed the presumptuous youth with a chilling glance, but Mrs. Clevenger laughed encouragingly at his audacity. Then she leaned over and clutched at Virginia's gown.

"Won't you complete our table and our happiness, Miss Hasbrouck?" she pleaded, with a coaxing smile. "Mr. Walmsley was just going to look for you."

"Thank you. I should be delighted, but Mr. Goodwin is keeping a place for me," answered Virginia, moving away.

When she looked again toward the table in the corner she saw that Mrs. Clevenger had drawn Bob Hargrave, a fat, smiling victim, into her little circle. She had dropped her long white cloak, and Virginia was a little horrified to observe that her gown was exceedingly décolleté, and that she had thrust one of her shoulders, from which the strap had dropped almost to her elbow, under the eyes of Philip Gordon, as she leaned aside to talk to him. Mrs. Clevenger's costume was rendered more conspicuous by the fact that she was the only woman so gowned.

It had not been a particularly happy evening for Virginia, although the party had been given in her honor, and was intended as a reunion of her school friends. She had not quite forgiven Mrs. Clevenger for taking her place in the motor and going to meet her friends. Another source of an-

noyance was Jimmie Goodwin. He had followed her with lamb-like persistence all the evening, and because he was Jimmie Goodwin, and the brother of her best chum, she could not snub him as he deserved. He had looked at her averted face and wondered why a girl with a profile like that should persist in turning her head away from a fellow, and questioned if she were really indifferent, or did it to give him an opportunity to admire her regular features.

When her friends were departing they demanded that Virginia accompany them on the trip to the station.

"You simply must come, Virginia," said Helen Goodwin. "You did not come to meet us, so the least you can do is to drive back with us."

"Yes; go, dear," urged Mrs. Hargrave. "It will be a pleasant wind-up to the evening." And in a lower tone, "If I should be in bed when you return, you won't mind? I am awfully tired."

"Where is Mrs. Clevenger?" demanded Philip Gordon, when the stage was ready to start and Mrs. Clevenger was not among the party. "We cannot go without her; she's so jolly, you know. Hullol Mrs. Clevenger!"

But Mrs. Clevenger answered not, although the very rocks resounded with her name, wildly called by the young people of the party, and Virginia noted with a little sinking of the heart, which she knew she had no right to feel, that Burton Walmsley was also missing.

The return trip in the motor was almost a silent one. Virginia was not inclined to talk, and Bob was too much engrossed in guiding the machine safely past black, shadowy things in the road, which might, on approach, prove substantially dangerous.

On reaching the cottage they found the lower rooms deserted and in semi-darkness, the few remaining candles guttering in the lanterns. Robert went into the dining-room, seeking refreshment, and Virginia walked to the further edge of the veranda, overlooking the water.

The moon was going down behind

the pines, the air was sweet and chill. The solemnity of the night—the sleeping waters, the black pines, the waning moon—was exquisite. On the rock below the scrub pine still held the rose-colored lantern on its outstretched arm. It looked so picturesque that Mrs. Hargrave had given orders that the candle be replenished, and it still glowed bravely.

Virginia rested tired arms on the railing and drank long draughts of the fragrant air. Nature was soothing her, after the noise and laughter, with its wondrous calm.

Then across the fading path of the moon glided a canoe. A man and a woman were in it. The man swung the paddle with long, stealthy sweeps; the woman crouched on the low seat, with her white draperies heaped about her.

Virginia felt instinctively that they were the truants, and was not surprised when the canoe grated on the beach just below her.

"Why, the house is in darkness!" cried Mrs. Clevenger, her voice high and penetrating. "Everybody seems to be gone. Oh, my poor reputation!"

"You will persist in these madcap pranks." It was Burton Walmsley's voice, half admiring, half chiding.

"I know it, and the doing is such fun that I don't think what the undoing might be, and you are such a dear boy not to scold—that is why I love you."

He was helping her ascend the rocks, and as she rose to the step above him, just under the rose-colored lantern, she turned and, stooping, took his face between her hands and bent her head above it. Then she ran laughing up the remainder of the steps.

Walmsley bounded after her. All his dignity and reserve were gone; he was like a boy in his eagerness. He overtook her on the narrow strip of lawn in front of the cottage, and seized her in his arms.

"Sally, you are a witch!" he cried.

There was no resistance, only half-laughing protest as he rained kisses on her upturned face.

They were so close to the piazza that Virginia feared they would see her.

She shrank back among the sheltering vines, trembling and sick with something besides fear.

"*Fi donc!*" cried Mrs. Clevenger, in a laughing whisper, pushing Walmsley away, but with clinging hands. "Suppose we should be seen! Hush-sh! Someone is stirring inside. Let's run!" And, seizing him by the hand, she darted around the house.

Stunned and horrified by what she had seen, Virginia sat staring across the now moonless sea, and the little rose-colored lantern, its duty done, flickered and went out.

IV

"THE COLD, GRAY DAWN"

THE following day broke gray and chill, the kind that often follows a night of glory. The gentle breeze which had swung the fat-bellied lanterns to Mrs. Hargrave's annoyance had developed into a moderately severe northeaster. No rain had fallen, but the clouds hung thick and low, and seemed liable to burst at any moment in a wild down-pour.

Breakfast, which was usually served on the piazza at Bluff Cottage, was laid this morning in the living-room opening from it.

It was eleven o'clock.

Betty was taking her seat behind the coffee urn when Virginia came down the stairs. Bobbie, seated at the piano, was executing Rubinstein's Melody in F. Out on the piazza, where the fat lanterns, elongated and ragged, twirled and whirled helplessly in the wind, Burton Walmsley, in raincoat and cap, paced to and fro, smoking.

"Well, I'm glad you've come down!" exclaimed Betty, a trifle fretfully, when she saw Virginia. "I can't get these men to come to breakfast, and it's late enough, goodness knows. Thomas, call Mr. Walmsley again. Robert, will you *please* stop that distracting noise?" Rubinstein, as you render him at 11 A.M., is rather too much for ordinary nerves."

Bobbie accepted the rebuff in meekness of spirit, and slid into his place at the table. Mr. Walmsley came in from the piazza through one of the long windows, bringing with him a gust of air, heavy with the smell of the sea.

The conversation during the meal was intermittent and inclined to be snappish. There was a sort of suppressed asperity in the atmosphere. Either the gloom of the morning or the reaction from the gaiety of the previous night had put a keen edge on the nerves of all. Betty was inclined to be peevish, Virginia was silent, Mr. Walmsley wrapped in reserve. Bobbie alone preserved his usual equanimity, impervious to atmospheric influences.

"We're in for a good blow," he observed cheerfully. "Shouldn't wonder if we had about three days of this."

"Oh, heavens! Have you nothing more agreeable to impart?" cried Betty. "A day like this upsets me horribly! How I could live through three I don't know."

"This is the first unpleasant weather we've had since we came to Pine Bluff. You can't expect all sunshine, Betty."

"I know; but I positively can't bear to look out on that awful, angry water. If it is like this tomorrow I'll take a run into town."

"The water was great this morning—surf like the ocean!" observed Walmsley, with some enthusiasm.

"You don't mean to say you've been in this morning?"

"I certainly have, and the water was never better. I was up at eight, had a bath and then went for a walk. It would be a fine morning for a trip in the motor boat, if we could get out to it. What do you say, Bob?"

Bob looked dubious.

"Pretty rough sea; don't you think so?"

"All the better. There's nothing like plunging over a heavy sea, beating against the wind, with the salt spray in one's face and the taste of it on one's lips. If you've never tried it, come with me, and you'll never forget it."

"Robert! You surely won't be so foolish!" expostulated his wife.

"Why, yes; I think I'd like it. It sounds nice as Burt describes it—heavy sea—salt spray, and—er—all that."

"I think you are both seriously demented," observed Betty, in a resigned tone; then suddenly, changing the subject, "Burton, *why* did Mrs. Clevenger get herself up in that ridiculous way last evening?"

Mr. Walmsley looked mildly surprised at the unexpected question, then smiled inscrutably.

"My dear Betty," he protested in his mildest tone and most provoking drawl, "why do you hold me responsible for Mrs. Clevenger's choice of a gown? I thought she looked charming."

"H'm—a man might. But what a costume to wear at a place like this! We are roughing it, and everything was supposed to be most informal last night. All the men wore flannels, and the women simple Summer gowns. It was not the place for evening dress, and such dress! I expected her waist to slide from her shoulders every moment. Really, I sometimes feel that Sally Clevenger is hardly—" Betty paused, glanced uncertainly at Virginia and then hurried on impetuously, "Well, hardly respectable."

Walmsley rose from the table, but paused with his hands resting on the back of his chair. If he was annoyed he gave no sign. He glanced quietly at Betty's hot face, and his voice was unruffled.

"I think you are unjust to Mrs. Clevenger," he said calmly. "She is not at all what you say. She is just a jolly good fellow. Excuse me, please; I think I will give the *Cyclone* a trial in a rough sea. Are you coming, Bobbie?"

"He is a strong champion," remarked Betty, when the men had departed.

"It is a quality to be admired," said Virginia quietly. "That was a very daring thing you said, Betty."

"I know, dear. I shouldn't have said it, but you can't understand how strong my feelings are in this matter."

I really believe Burton is serious this time, and I think that woman quite capable of getting a divorce and marrying him. I said marrying *him*, for he will have little to say if she makes up her mind, and I sometimes believe she has done so already. She will never let him escape, and to call that woman cousin—! Thank heaven, the relationship is no closer!”

“But who is Mr. Clevenger?”

“Mrs. Clevenger’s husband, that’s all; quiet, plain in appearance, but a gentleman, good-natured and poor. His wife does as she pleases, and he stands by admiring. Burton Walmsley is his exact opposite—good-looking and masterful and, more than all, has money, and Sally Clevenger knows it. Oh, he will *never* escape!”

Virginia rose from the table and went to the window. Mr. Walmsley and Bob Hargrave, unruffled by the wind which tore about them, were making their way along the beach.

“I think I’ll go for a walk, Betty; if you don’t mind being left alone.”

Betty joined her at the window, but shuddered as she looked across the gray swollen waters.

“No, I don’t mind being alone. Some new books came up yesterday, and I had no time to look at them. But why you want to ramble around a day like this I can’t imagine. You will be blown off the cliff.”

“No danger, Betty. I love a day like this. I just envy the men their trip.”

“Then for goodness’ sake, why didn’t you go with them?”

“Simply because I wasn’t invited,” with a little laugh. “But they would probably consider a girl a nuisance—think I would need too much attention.”

“I don’t suppose they had the remotest idea you would care to go. I simply couldn’t be dragged into those things.”

Bare-headed, with raincoat buttoned closely about her lithe, erect form, Virginia struggled against the wind along the bluff. She wanted to go away by herself and fight something. The weather granted her first desire,

and offered an antagonist to satisfy the latter.

With head thrown back and hands in her pockets she defied the elements. She drank in great draughts of salt, spray-drenched air, and exulted in the wild gusts that swept around her, tearing at her clothing and beating her face. Gulls circled close inshore, then wheeled away across the gray water. The shore was covered with driftwood and wreckage. Rowboats and canoes, torn from their moorings and filled with sand and seaweed, strewn the beach.

On the hillside some boys were camping. In stormcoats, with bare legs, they huddled around a smoky fire, trying to shield it from the wind by making screens of their coats, while one cooked their dinner.

Virginia smiled at them and they grinned back cheerfully.

“How do you like it, boys?” she asked.

“Not very much this weather,” they answered, “but it’s all right.”

Out on the point the waves were pounding, breaking with a mighty boom, and tossing swirls of spray high in the air. Virginia climbed out as far as she dare, and found a comparatively sheltered nook where she could enjoy the play which nature had provided for her entertainment, and think out the thoughts that were troubling her.

She felt hurt and resentful; her poor little pride was stung. She gloried in the tumult about her, and longed to shriek back to the winds that shrieked at her. She was even willing to let the salt spray dash in her face; it might cool the burning flame in her cheeks.

Why did this man persist in slighting her as she had never been slighted before? Was she not pretty enough, amiable enough, to compel any man’s admiration? And all she asked of him was the most ordinary courtesy. It was not indifference; of that she was convinced, cold and apathetic as he appeared. She felt that he acted intentionally, and his reason for doing so puzzled her. No woman likes to be ignored. The

sensation, while decidedly new to her, was not at all pleasant.

She remembered the first time that he had slighted her, and the surprised shock with which the conviction had come to her. It had not seemed possible that she, who had held her little court of admirers before a cycle had whirled over her infant head, who had been the pet of the college, a belle among the men who came over to the senior dances, should be set aside for a woman, married and, according to her youthful arrogance, no longer young.

Virginia had been brought up in a rather formal, old-fashioned way, and had formed her ideas of married women from her own motherly mother, and other motherly women in the quaint Southern town which was her home. There all men were chivalrous and all women gentle. She had kept her high ideals all through her college career, and this young matron's frivolity was a revelation to her.

She recalled how at the college dances the married graduates—matrons of two or three years—were relegated to the rank of the wallflowers and chaperons, grateful when a college man, under a sense of duty, withdrew from the younger girls and asked one of them to dance, but with an air of bestowing rather than seeking a favor. But this woman was different. She monopolized attentions that by right belonged to others. She had kept Philip Gordon at her side to the chagrin of Helen Goodwin, and on tiring of his devotion had lifted her finger to Burton Walmsley, and he had followed, even, as it seemed, to his undoing.

Looking back along the beach Virginia saw Bluff Cottage perched high on the rocks, very white against the leaden sky, its ragged lanterns and torn bunting flapping dismally. At the foot of the steps a dark object was pounding on the beach with every wave which rolled in and receded. It was the canoe used by Mr. Walmsley and Mrs. Clevenger the previous night.

Recalling the scene she had witnessed in the moonlight, and Betty's hasty words at the breakfast-table, Virginia

felt that she had found a part, if not a full, solution to the question that troubled her. Burton Walmsley was madly, foolishly in love with Mrs. Clevenger, and for her sake, possibly at her caprice, assumed an indifference to all others. But surely this did not condone for his apparently studied slights to his cousin's cousin.

Above the roar of the wind and the resonant boom of the waves the inharmonious "chug-chug" of a motor boat came distinctly to Virginia's ears. The sound came nearer, and then, around the point, beyond the peril of the rocks, she saw a long, slim body splitting the waves. With its every plunge a shower of spray was thrown over the occupants of the boat, and a woman's laugh rang out after each deluge.

It was Mrs. Clevenger's laugh, and her face, rosy and drenched with salt spray, but sparkling with merriment under an oilskin cap, which would have made any other woman look hideous, was turned toward Virginia for a moment as the boat darted by. The other occupants of the boat she had no difficulty in identifying.

V

THE OPINION OF THOMAS

"Do you think her pretty?" asked Mary, the cook, anxiously.

Thomas, the butler, was watering the lawn. It was a self-imposed task and one which might have been considered derogatory to his position, but for some unexplained reason he seemed pleased to assume it.

Mary had been sweetening his labor with snatches of conversation passed through the kitchen window, but noting the approach of Mrs. Hargrave and her cousin, she snapped the question off abruptly and drew coyly back, leaving Thomas staring rather foolishly at the vacant window.

Mrs. Hargrave and Virginia came leisurely up the drive and followed the path around the house. As they disap-

peered Mary's face peeped rosily out between the vines which clambered about the kitchen window.

"Are they gone?" she asked cautiously.

"Yes, they're gone," snapped Thomas rather tartly. "That was a pretty shabby trick to play on me, Mary. The ladies knew I'd been talking to someone. I 'adn't even time to pick up the 'ose, and it made me appear very silly standing 'ere, looking up and talking to myself."

"Well, you know, Mr. Billings, I have an idea that Mrs. Hargrave don't like to see me talking to you. Perhaps she thinks we waste time." Then going back to her first question, "Do you think her pretty?" she asked, with a jerk of her head toward the corner of the house around which Virginia had disappeared.

"H'm, yes, rather," replied Billings condescendingly, plucking a withered leaf from the vine and casting it aside. "I'm thinking it would be better taste if Mr. Walmsley would pay 'is attentions to 'er instead of to that widow, or whatever she is, that's always coming 'round 'ere after 'im. As soon as I sees a female a-runnin' after a man, and throwin' 'erself in 'is way, I 'as my opinions."

"A woman should wait to be courted. Don't you think so, Mr. Billings?"

"Precisely, my dear; and I'm glad to 'ear such refined sentiments from your lips. Now, as I was sayin'—Mr. Walmsley is a man of sense, with the dignity of a true gentleman—oh, I can tell 'em at a glance, Mary. I didn't serve Lord Kilburn for seven years without seein' a thing or two—and why he wastes 'is time on a flighty creature like Mrs. Clevenger, when there's a pretty, refined young lady like Miss 'Asbrouck close to 'is 'and, and so to speak, I can't hunderstand."

"But Miss Hasbrouck has been here such a short time; perhaps Mr. Walmsley has not had time to fall in love with her, although for my part I don't care about your cautious kind of men. I'd like a man," plucking coquettishly at the leaves growing about the window,

"I'd like a man that'd fall headlong in love with me at first sight, propose to me the very next day, and marry me the next. That," casting up her eyes sentimentally, "is real love, and real romance."

"You talk very foolish and flighty sometimes, Mary," said Thomas severely. "Men of dignity never *fall* in love; they walk slow and graceful, in evening clothes and hopera 'at, so to speak."

"Then give me less dignity and more feeling," said Mary, plucking fast and nervously. Some of the leaves lodged in Thomas's hair, giving him the appearance of a dignified Bacchus.

"Speaking of Mrs. Clevenger," resumed Billings, retreating to a safe distance to avoid the shower of leaves, "what did you think of 'er performance the night of the party?"

"Driving the stage? Oh, that was splendid! She certainly made a great hit with the gentlemen. Isn't it strange how they seem to admire a woman that does those crazy things?"

"They're amused by them, Mary. They follow them up, wondering what they are going to do next, but you never see a gentleman choosing that kind of a woman for 'is wife."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mary thoughtfully. "From what I've seen they usually make the best matches, and even if they don't, a woman does not want to marry every man she sees, but she *does* like to have them dangling after her."

Thomas stared at Mary in severe displeasure.

"Mary, I'm surprised to 'ear such sentiments from a young gell like you. I 'opes you won't attempt to follow the hexample of a woman like Mrs. Clevenger."

"I'm afraid I'll never get the chance," pouted Mary, with a sigh. "What did you think of her gown, Thomas?"

"I considers it very much hout of place," said Thomas loftily. "Hit was a hinformal haffair, and none of the other ladies wore such décolleté gowns."

"She reminded me of a woman I once saw in a play called 'Du Barry.' She wore a gown like that, with only a strap for a sleeve, and she kept letting it drop down to show a bit of court-plaster on her shoulder. And the way Mrs. Clevenger kept hunching her shoulder under the eyes of young Mr. Gordon, while he was talking to her at the table, made me think of the 'Du Barry' woman."

"Did you notice those two?" asked Mrs. Hargrave of Virginia, as they proceeded toward the point.

"I only saw one—Thomas, and I thought he looked rather foolish."

"Oh, Mary was close at hand, you may be sure of that. I am really getting worried about them."

"Why, Betty? They seem exceptionally good servants."

"So they are, and that's why I'm afraid of losing them, at least afraid of losing Mary. Haven't you noticed a fondness between them?"

"Why, no," replied Virginia, laughing. "You surely don't mean that. I think Thomas much too dignified to make love."

"So he is, but Mary makes love to him. He doesn't know it, but it's taking effect just the same. Have you observed how green the grass is under the kitchen window? That's where she keeps him talking when he's watering the lawn. All the rest is dry and sun-baked."

Virginia laughed merrily. "How observing you are, Betty! Perhaps their fondness for each other will keep them contented at Pine Bluff."

"Yes, I'm inclined to think it will, if I can only prevent them from rushing into matrimony until we get back to the city. I've put as many obstacles as possible in the course of their true love; not enough to cause a quarrel—heaven forbid!—but I don't want to lose Mary."

"At first I was very dense about the affair, and could not understand why the housemaids never stayed with me. They always gave notice within a week or two, and Mary's temper was ever their excuse for leaving. Of course, I took Mary's part in all altercations.

I simply couldn't afford to lose her if I had to do the housemaid's work myself. And Mary was so nice about it; she did a great deal that it was really not her place to do, and even went into the village and got a colored woman to come out and clean for me by the day, saying she would rather have a nigger around than some of those stuck-up maids who think they're a whole lot.

"And then I woke up, my dear; and realized that Mary did not want temptation in the shape of a pretty housemaid thrust in Billings's path."

"Oh, Cousin Betty!" cried Virginia. "Your insight is marvelous!"

Beneath the kitchen window Thomas, the butler, was remarking to his sweetheart, "Th' old gell 'as a pretty keen heye, but she don't see heverythink. Heh, Mary?"

VI

WHAT VIRGINIA SAW IN THE MOONLIGHT

HELEN GOODWIN ran over from Cedarhurst, ostensibly to make a "party call," but while she chatted with Virginia on different subjects, all reference to that occasion was tacitly avoided by both girls.

Helen chiefly enthused on the beauties of Pine Bluff, as they sat on the wide veranda, which commanded a view of the entire beach and the cottages facing it.

"I wish mother had taken a cottage here," she said, her gaze fixed absently on the stretch of yellow sand. "The beach is so much better than at Cedarhurst."

Virginia assented. There was something in Helen's manner, while she talked of trivialities, which led Virginia to think that she was withholding something that she had come to say, but was finding hard to approach.

They sat silent for a moment, Helen drawing her long gloves idly through her hands. Then as her eyes were still fixed on the curve of the beach, a man and a woman came down the steps of

the Fair View House to the beach below, and walked leisurely in the direction of the bath-houses. They were Philip Gordon and Mrs. Clevenger.

Helen looked at Virginia, and saw that she, too, had seen them, and as Virginia turned to meet her glance there was a sort of shrinking in it.

She rose hastily and began drawing on her gloves.

"I will go now," she said, "now that I have seen for myself. Do you see much of it?" She nodded toward the distant figures, and Virginia noticed that the color had left her face, and that her lips trembled.

"No," said Virginia, glad that she could speak truthfully, "I have never seen them together since—since the night of my dance."

"And I have heard—gossip travels quickly, you know—that he has been with her constantly ever since. But I could not believe it; I had to see for myself. What shall I do, Virginia? What would *you* do?"

Virginia thought in her girlish pride and ignorance of affairs of the heart that she would know what to do without asking advice, but instead of saying what was in her thoughts she asked gently, "Do you care very much?"

"Yes, I do—very much. If I did not, I would know what to do, but Phil is everything to me, and I can't give him up to that woman. If it were anyone else—if it were for his good, I would try, but it isn't. She only wants him because he amuses her for some reason, as she wants every young and good-looking man to dangle at her heels and increase her popularity. Oh, I know her sort."

"I never met anyone just like her before," said Virginia slowly. "I have heard the girls at college speak of the 'sporty' matrons, those who smoke and drink with the boys and establish a sort of camaraderie between them that a single girl would not risk even if so inclined, but I always believed that she was a mere creature of their imagination."

"No; she exists, more's the pity."

Helen's lips looked very grim as she

watched those two figures ascend the steps leading to the bath-houses, and saw the woman give the broad shoulders of her companion a friendly little pat as she turned and disappeared into one of the houses.

"Helen," cried Virginia impulsively, "don't give him up—that is, if you care. That will not last. He will tire of her, or she will tire of him, and then he'll come back."

"Oh, my poor pride!" groaned Helen. "If only I did not care—but I do."

That night Virginia was unable to sleep. Her conversation with Helen, and the memory of her friend's white face, haunted her pillow and drove sleep from her eyes.

The night was insufferably hot, the air, even from the sea, stifling, and Virginia soon discovered that she was not the only inmate of Bluff Cottage unable to rest.

Mrs. Hargrave wandered from room to room in search of a breeze. She tapped softly at Virginia's door, and then pushed it open. "Are you asleep?" she asked, peering into the semi-gloom.

"No, Betty. Come in."

She entered, trailing her long white peignoir behind her.

"Of course not; no one could sleep a night like this—except Bobbie," in a tone of disgust. "He's slumbering like a babe, and when I woke him up and asked him if he didn't want to come and hunt for a breeze, he just blinked at me and asked, 'What for?'"

Virginia laughed. "There's none here, Betty, or I'd share it with you."

"There *ought* to be one here," said Betty in an aggrieved tone, as if Virginia were at fault. "Right over the water! But the Sound is like a mirror tonight, not a ripple on it. I wish Bob would get up. We might put on our bathing-suits and take a dip. Did you ever bathe by moonlight?"

"No, but it must be glorious!" said Virginia eagerly. "Can't we do it?"

"We can't go alone at this hour—it's nearly one o'clock."

"Where's Mr. Walmsley? Perhaps he would accompany us."

"He's not in his room. The door is open and the room empty. He's probably gone down on the beach to keep cool—lucky man!"

Betty sat on the edge of Virginia's bed, discontentedly kicking a bare foot from which the slipper had fallen.

"Listen to that!" she said.

Virginia listened. Through the open door came a steady, rhythmic roar, broken at regular intervals by a thin shriek like that made by escaping steam.

"'Tis somethin' like th' risin' wind,

'Tis somethin' like th' ocean,

But more like 'Bijah Morrow's bull,

Accordin' to my notion,"

quoted Virginia softly.

"Isn't it awful to have a husband like that," demanded Betty, with a jerk of her head in the direction whence the sounds came. "Really a woman should feel justified in getting a divorce from a man that snores. I think I'll go down on the veranda and try to sleep in the hammock. Anything to get away from that sound. Will you come?"

"No; I think not. This chair is very comfortable, and I think it will get cooler toward dawn. But I'll come with you if you feel nervous about going down alone," she added.

"Oh, no. Blinks will keep me company."

Virginia heard her slippers pad softly down the stairs; heard the tattoo of welcome beaten by Blinks's bob tail, and a few minutes after the house was silent save for Bob's snoring, and Virginia knew that Betty had found relief and possibly rest on the porch.

Then she arose and closed her door, to shut out, if possible, the sound that was irritating even to her usually strong nerves. Returning to the window she leaned out in the breathless stillness.

Almost opposite her window, on the farther curve of the bluff, the Fair View House gleamed white in the moonlight, and a few—a very few—lights still twinkled from its windows across the water.

A little to the right and clustered under the cliff were the bath-houses belonging to the hotel. Virginia was surprised to see that a light still burned in one of them, and wondered if someone more fortunate than she were going in for a moonlight dip. As she watched the light idly, the door opened and a figure emerged. It seemed to halt for a moment on the threshold, and then sped stealthily down the steps and along the beach.

As the solitary figure drew nearer, Virginia saw that it was a woman, and apparently clad for bathing, as her arms and neck gleamed white in the moonlight. In fact, it was Mrs. Clevenger, or as Virginia a little scornfully concluded, it could be no one *but* Mrs. Clevenger.

She sped lightly along the beach until she had left the Fair View House and its lights behind her. Then she flung herself on the sand, still wet from the receding tide, and with her hands clasped behind her head, she leaned back in an attitude of comfort against one of the boats drawn up on the beach.

Virginia half envied her the independence of spirit that permitted her thus to scorn conventionalities and follow her own impulses without questioning what the world would say.

Then Virginia was aware that another figure had come upon the moonlit scene. From somewhere on the beach below her window, until now unseen or unnoticed, Burton Walmsley emerged from the shadows of the bluff, and sauntered toward the solitary figure on the sand.

Mrs. Clevenger sprang lightly to her feet on his approach, and Virginia heard her exclamation of surprise which sounded quite genuine. After the first exclamation they spoke in low, guarded tones, and occasionally Virginia heard Mrs. Clevenger's laugh, cautiously lowered.

A few minutes later Walmsley began hauling in one of the boats, moored off the shore. It was the tender of the *Cyclone*. As it ground on the sand Mrs. Clevenger sprang in, and Walmsley followed more leisurely. He pushed

off, and a few powerful strokes brought them alongside the *Cyclone*.

Scarcely heeding Walmsley's proffered hand, Mrs. Clevenger climbed nimbly over the gunwale of the motor boat.

Virginia watched them, astonished and still incredulous. It could not be possible that Mrs. Clevenger, with all her disregard for the conventionalities, would do anything quite so daring as these preliminaries seemed to indicate.

Walmsley made the tender fast, started the engine, which responded with a few muffled snorts, and then the motor boat swung away from her moorings. Making a wide sweep, it headed straight for the open Sound.

As Virginia sat staring after the vanishing speck in the moonlight, she heard a movement on the porch below, followed by the patter of Betty's footsteps ascending the stairs. The next moment she burst into the room *sans cérémonie*.

"Did you see that?" she demanded breathlessly.

Virginia laughed.

"I thought you were asleep."

"Asleep! With anything like that going on under my nose? Oh, no, my dear!"

VII

WHAT WALMSLEY SAW IN THE MOON-LIGHT

THE fiery heat wave that had swept the country had burned itself out, and Walmsley had ventured into the city to look after his business interests. There he had found it so unendurable that he hurried back to Pine Bluff the same day, or, more properly speaking, the evening of the same day.

The house was silent when he drove up to it in a depot hack. Thinking that the family had either retired or were congregated on the piazza overlooking the water, he went directly to his room to get rid of the dust of travel and change his clothes, which seemed to retain the heat of the city.

Through the wide windows of his room, overlooking the sea, a fresh breeze was stirring the curtains. The very sight was enticing, after the breathless heat of the day, so instead of immediately turning on the electric lights Walmsley flung himself into a chair by the window to rest in the semi-gloom.

Along the eastern horizon a pale light heralded the rising of the moon. It seemed to Walmsley that there was always a moon at Pine Bluff, and then he smiled a little whimsically, as he realized that for those who kept late hours there usually was a moon in one of its phases.

Out of the dusk below him came the sound of voices, the soft tinkle of a guitar, and then a girl's voice, singing. He had never heard Virginia Hasbrouck sing, yet he knew on the instant that the voice was hers. It was full and rich and carried many of the notes of her speaking tones; in fact, it was rather too good to be wasted on the night air, to the tinkling accompaniment of a guitar. But the night was "fair and holy," and the girl's voice seemed a part of the beauty and the fragrance.

Down on the veranda and on the rocks below Walmsley saw the gleam of white dresses, with here and there a man's dark clothing. Their voices came to him quite clearly in a burst of approval as the song died away:

"Charming!"

"Exquisite!"

Then Betty's voice: "Virginia dear, sing '*Du bist mir nah' und doch so fern!*'"

Walmsley waited with interest. Would she be able to sing it as it should be rendered?

A few preliminary chords, and then her voice rose on the pulsing air, rich and low, with a plaintive timbre. The moon at that moment emerged from behind a fleecy veil and revealed the figures below.

Virginia was seated on the edge of the plateau in her favorite place, leaning against the scrub pine. Some of the people from the neighboring cottages were there, also Betty in her steamer-chair, with Bobbie and Blinks in a devoted heap at her feet. Mrs. Clevenger

was not of the party, and Walmsley smiled a little sadly.

Poor Sally! Merry, madcap Sally! Was she to be ostracized for her daring and open defiance of Mrs. Grundy's opinion? There was no harm in her; just a love of fun and a reckless disregard of appearances. In a man's opinion a woman's conduct is always innocuous when he is the chosen companion of her peccadillos. Of course there was a difference between her and—say this girl from the South, with her cold rectitude of conduct, her girlish dignity, but Sally was all right in her way. Of course it was not the way which he, in his inmost heart, approved. He had been brought up according to old-fashioned standards, to admire modesty and womanly dignity, but the rapid pace of the new century with its "sporty" girls and frisky matrons had swept him off his feet, and he was swirling along merrily with the current. Far be it from the man whose blood runs red to hang back in priggish disapproval when lovely woman sets the pace and beckons him to follow!

And Sally was all right, anyway. In spite or because of her cigarettes and cocktails, she was a jolly good fellow. He chuckled softly as he recalled some of her pranks of the past few weeks, and the lorgnetted stares they had called forth. The launchride in the midnight—nay, the morning hours. (If Mrs. Grundy but knew!) Thenight, but a week ago, when she had challenged him to steal away from the dancers, and they had paddled away in the moonlight like a pair of truant children; their return, when the guests had gone and the house was dark and silent; their stealthy landing; the ascent of the rocks; the pause under the rose-colored lantern; her daring, and his boyish folly! Ah, well, where was the harm? He was a gentleman, and she knew it. With no other, he assured himself with grave egotism, would she so conduct herself.

A chorus of good nights came floating up to his window. The neighbors were taking their leave, and Bob and Betty, hand in hand like a pair of lovers, strolled around the drive with their

guests, leaving Virginia alone on the plateau. She sat for some time, strumming idly at the strings, and crooning softly the melody of the song she had last sung. She looked so ethereal in the pale moonlight, so far removed from earthly things, that Walmsley found himself murmuring:

Beloved star,
"Thou art so near, and yet so far,"

for so she ever seemed to him.

Then Betty called from the veranda: "Are you coming in, Virginia, or would you care to stay out longer? It's nearly eleven."

"I think I'll come in, although it is really too beautiful to go indoors to-night."

With a lingering look at the moonlit sea Virginia slowly ascended the steps, and a moment after Walmsley heard her voice as she and Betty came upstairs together.

Without the stillness of the night was broken by a ripple of infectious laughter—Mrs. Clevenger's laugh—and from the shadows below the cliff a white-clad figure stepped out on the shining sands. She raised bare white arms to the sky, and in one uplifted hand glowed the red spark of a cigarette.

"Thank heaven, they're gone at last!" she cried, the metallic quality of her voice making her words perfectly clear to Walmsley's ear. "I thought I was imprisoned there for the night."

"Why did you care? You were afraid," said her companion tauntingly.

"No-o. I was not afraid. It was consideration for you that made me hide. It is you who should care, you reckless child. Can't you imagine the thrilling tale Miss Hasbrouck would have to tell a certain young lady in Cedarhurst tomorrow if she had seen us together?"

"I don't believe she would tell, and I don't think Helen would care if she knew."

"Tut, tut, my dear child! Any girl would care—if she knew, and I'm so thoughtful of the feelings of others that I don't want her to know. Let's get away. I'll race you to the end of the beach for a box of Egyptians."

And gathering up her light draperies Mrs. Clevenger darted up the beach with Philip Gordon in close pursuit.

But Walmsley did not watch for the result of the race. Instead he rose abruptly from his seat by the window and switched on the electric light. As his eyes became accustomed to the sudden flood of brightness they met his own reflection in the mirror.

"Do you know that you are all kinds of an ass?" he asked softly, as he removed his necktie and laid it aside.

VIII

IN WHICH BETTY SPOILS AN OUTING

THE week following Bluff Cottage was taxed to the utmost of its rather limited capacity by an overflow of guests. Bob Hargrave had invited some friends from the West to stop over for a few days while on a visit to the East, and Betty had invited the Corwins down for the week-end.

In the slight confusion caused by receiving and entertaining so many visitors Virginia had seen but little of Mr. Walmsley and still less of Mrs. Clevenger, but she was somehow conscious that they were not as much together as formerly; in fact, on the few occasions when she had seen Mrs. Clevenger she had been accompanied by Philip Gordon, who was growing quite bold and open in his attentions.

Helen Goodwin and her mother had gone on a visit to Maine, leaving Jimmie to his own resources, and he, evidently finding Cedarhurst lonely in their absence, had come down to Pine Bluff and taken up his abode at the Fair View House; that is, his sleeping quarters were there, but his waking hours were spent in haunting the footsteps of Virginia Hasbrouck, with the same annoying and lamb-like persistence that ever characterized his devotion.

Loyalty to her friend prevented Virginia from being unkind to her friend's brother, but the effort to be kind to Jimmie Goodwin was so exhausting

that she grew to hate the very sight of his slim, gray-clad figure, his mincing walk and his thin blond hair, crowned with a wide-brimmed straw hat, decorated with a vari-colored ribbon.

This apparition hove in sight one morning early when the guests of Bluff Cottage were gathered on the wide veranda, and Virginia, acting on an impulse, seized up her book and beat a hasty retreat down the side steps in the direction of the road.

Walmsley, sitting on the edge of the railing, noted Virginia's hurried flight and looked about for a cause. He found none until his glance fell upon Jimmie Goodwin, his usually pale face crimson with heat and exertion, climbing the steep steps approaching the cottage. Then he wondered!

"You are going to have more company," he observed to Betty, who was sitting near.

She gathered up her fancy work and leaned over the railing.

"More!" she exclaimed tragically, but her face cleared when she saw Jimmie. "It's only Jimmie Goodwin," she said in a relieved tone. "Why did you frighten me like that? Poor boy, how warm he looks! He is so devoted to Virginia. Nothing can keep him away."

"So it seems," said Walmsley drily.

"Where is Virginia?" Betty looked about her anxiously. "She was here a moment ago."

"Yes; I saw her sitting in the hammock," said Walmsley blandly.

"Where *can* she be? Good morning, Jimmie. Take this chair; it's an easy one. You look dreadfully warm and tired. Virginia? She was here a moment ago. I'll send for her."

"I heard Miss Hasbrouck say something about going up to the village," said Walmsley, with a wicked desire to see the perspiring youth forced to further exertions. Betty glanced at him suspiciously, but he returned her gaze innocently.

"Did she say she was going to walk?"

"Oh, yes. If I remember correctly she said something about the mill road."

"Has she been gone long?" asked Jimmie anxiously.

"No; just gone. I think you could overtake her if you hurried."

Jimmie sighed. The club chair was very comfortable, the veranda cool and shady, and on a table close at hand were some temptingly cool drinks, while he was tired and warm and very thirsty. But his allegiance to Virginia triumphed over all temptation, so he left the cool depths of the wicker chair, mopping his lofty brow, determination glittering in his eye.

"Which is the mill road?" he asked.

Walmsley escorted him to the top of the piazza steps and pointed it out to him, with full directions for reaching the village, then stood, watching with a sardonic smile, as he trudged down the dusty white highway.

When Walmsley returned to Betty's side that lady observed anxiously:

"I hope he will find her. It's such a hot day to walk to the village. I wonder what possessed her to do so?"

"It's hard to tell. Girls take queer notions sometimes."

"It will be such a good thing for her," Betty went on musingly.

"What? The walk?"

"No, silly! I mean Jimmie Goodwin."

"I can't imagine him being good for anyone except as a sort of discipline."

"Burton! How you do take one up! Of course you know what I mean—that it would be an excellent match for Virginia. He is a most estimable young man, and *very* wealthy."

"Then there is nothing left to be desired," said Walmsley lightly, but he found himself wondering if Miss Hasbrouck shared her cousin's opinion of Mr. Goodwin, and the desirability of a union with him. And as the thought continued to torment him, he determined to find out, if possible, and as expeditiously as possible. This determination led him to swing his legs lazily over the railing, and before he was missed from the veranda he was making his way down the shore road, whither he had seen a white gown and

cool, green sunshade making their way a short time before.

At a turn in the road a footpath zig-zags down through the pine grove, almost black with shade, to the rocks at the water's edge. Following this path, Walmsley found Virginia seated on a mound of pine needles, the green sunshade at her feet, an open book on her knee, but her gaze wandering dreamily out to sea.

She started as the crackle of dry twigs announced Walmsley's approach, and when she saw him a delicate flush mounted to her temples.

"Mr. Walmsley!" a little guiltily. "Is Betty looking for me?"

"No, but I am—at least I was, and so is someone else." Walmsley mixed his tenses woefully.

"You mean Mr. Goodwin?" A tiny smile tugged at the corners of her mouth.

"Yes. He is searching wildly for you down the mill road."

"The *mill* road? What made him think I had gone that way?"

"I told him so."

"You told him!" Virginia's tone was one of surprise, but her eyes, as they met Walmsley's, crinkled up at the corners, and the dearest dimple just showed itself in her cheek. "What made you do that?"

"Well, of course I couldn't be sure which road you had taken, but as the shore road is the most pleasant I chose it for myself, and sent him the other way."

"And was it so imperative that I be found?"

"It was to me." Miss Hasbrouck turned her head and looked across the water. "And it seemed to be of vital importance to Mr. Goodwin."

Again Virginia's eyes crinkled up, and the dimple came into play. When she looked like that Walmsley felt that he could give her his heart to play golf with.

"Poor Jimmie! And the mill road is so hot and sunny!"

"That's why I sent him that way."

Walmsley stretched himself luxuriously on a bed of pine needles, and

looked aggravatingly cool and comfortable. Virginia eyed him severely.

"Mr. Goodwin is a very estimable young man," she said.

"So Betty says, but I really can't believe it while he wears that vicious hatband. It shows low tastes."

Again that distracting dimple. She was losing control of it now.

"He's a brother of my best friend," she protested weakly.

"I should consider the price of her friendship too high."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Walmsley," with great dignity. "I like Jimmie for——"

"Don't say it, Miss Hasbrouck; let me beseech you, as you love the truth and hate a lie, don't say you like Jimmie Goodwin—for himself."

Virginia struggled hard to keep her dignity. Loyalty to Helen, even to Jimmie himself—for there was something pathetic in his unselfish devotion—urged her to resent Walmsley's nonsense, but his eyes were laughing audaciously into hers, and his quick perception of Jimmie's feelings touched her sense of humor, so that against her will her dignity tottered and fell in a ripple of merriment.

When they had laughed together Walmsley felt that they were better friends than they had ever been, and made haste to further his advantage.

"I discovered the most picturesque place yesterday in my motorings," he began wilyly, "such a place as you would never dream of finding hereabouts; a Swiss chalet on the banks of a river—such a noisy, brawling little stream, fairly teeming with cascades and tiny waterfalls. You can dine on one of the wide balconies, hanging low over the river, soothed by the music of the cascade, the soft whisper of zithers and the quaint folk-songs of a band of Tyrolean minstrels. There's a garden, too, running riot with old-fashioned flowers, and leafy arbors where one can drink Rhine wine from tall green glasses whereon quaint legends are inscribed, or beer from rare old steins, and fancy that the babbling stream at your feet is the Rhine itself."

"Where is this charming place?" asked Virginia. "Your description makes me curious."

"It's about fifteen miles north of Cedarhurst, a little off the main road. I came upon it quite by chance, but I hear that the motorists have already discovered it; it is quite the thing to drive out there for dinner. I wish you would go over with me some day; I know you'd be charmed with the place."

"Perhaps I may—some day."

"Why not today? Suppose we go over this morning and have lunch on one of those little white balconies, and listen to the zithers?"

Virginia pondered for a moment.

"I'm afraid it might seem discourteous to Betty's guests if I ran away."

"Oh, bother the guests!" said Walmsley, anxious to push his advantage. "I'll go home and get the car, and you wait here until I return. They'll never miss you."

"You make me feel very unimportant," said Virginia, smiling. "I must explain to Betty, or she might think I had eloped with Mr. Goodwin."

"Perish such an unworthy thought!" said Walmsley devoutly.

When she reached the cottage Virginia took time to change her costume for a soft, rose-colored gown that she fancied would harmonize well with the white touring-car. A rose-laden hat, tipped demurely on one side and tilted distractingly on the other, crowned her dark hair. A sunshade the color of her gown, with long ivory stick, added the correct note to her costume.

She surveyed herself in the mirror with a pleased smile, for the picture was good to look at. Then she went in search of Betty.

She found her in the living-room, arranging flowers for the table, a task that Virginia usually assumed.

"You are going out?" she asked in surprise, looking over Virginia's rather elaborate costume. "Jimmie Goodwin has been looking everywhere for you. Burton said you had gone to the village."

"Yes, I know—I mean I heard he

was looking for me. I was out, but I wasn't where he thought I was."

"So it seems," said Betty drily. "I had some doubt about it at the time. Where are you going now? It's very near lunch-time."

"Yes; that's what I wanted to see you about. I won't be home for luncheon. Mr. Walmsley is going to take me to—I don't know exactly where it is, somewhere beyond Cedarhurst; a picturesque little place where they serve nice luncheons."

"Who is going with you?"

"No one but Mr. Walmsley."

"What! You are going unchaperoned!"

"Why, Betty, is that so very dreadful? Other girls do it, and then, Mr. Walmsley is a sort of cousin."

"Yes, a sort of cousin, but I'm afraid that would not take the curse off."

Virginia swung her parasol to and fro, watching its pendulum-like motion, a perplexed pucker between her brows.

"Of course, Betty," she said slowly, "if you disapprove of it, I will not go, but I don't think it can be so very dreadful to go driving alone with a man acquaintance, because mother permits me to do so when I'm at home, and many of the girls at college are allowed to."

Betty did not respond at once. She snipped at the stems of the nasturtiums, and arranged the flowers in the bowls with much precision, her eyes intent on her task. When she did speak it was to ask a question as if changing the subject.

"Has Mrs. Clevenger left Pine Bluff?"

Virginia opened her eyes very wide in surprise. "I don't know. I haven't heard."

She studied Betty's averted face for a moment, and then as the meaning of her question became apparent, her cheeks went as pink as the roses on her hat. "You mean," she said, with a little gasp, "you mean that Mr. Walmsley would not invite me to go with him if Mrs. Clevenger were here?"

"Well, I know that for some reason he and Mrs. Clevenger are not such

good friends as they were, and I thought——"

"I know what you think," said Virginia chokingly. "You think he is consoling himself with me while she plays with Philip Gordon. Perhaps it is true, but my pride would not let me see it. Don't worry, Cousin Betty, about the impropriety of my driving with Mr. Walmsley. I am not going."

Without waiting for a reply, Virginia, with tears blinding her eyes, hurried from the room and across the hall. At the foot of the stairs she almost collided with Burton Walmsley, who was descending.

An exclamation of admiration escaped him at sight of the rose-colored vision, followed by one of consternation as he caught a glimpse of the distressed aspect of the rose.

"Why, Miss Hasbrouck, what is the matter?"

"Nothing," she said in a choked voice, hurrying by with averted head. "Nothing, except that I have changed my mind. I cannot go with you."

Walmsley stood speechless, and gazed stupidly after the rose-clad figure as it swept upward, without a pause or backward glance. As it disappeared around the bend in the stairs, he gathered himself together and passed down the hall.

In the shade of the porte-cochère stood his big white touring-car. He stepped in and pulled back the lever with an angry jerk. The machine responded with a defiant snort as it swung out of the open gate. The next moment Walmsley was speeding rapidly down the road, not toward the Swiss chalet on the river's bank, but in the direction of the sweltering city.

IX

WELSH RABBIT

THOMAS, with much gallantry, assisted Mary into the depot hack, tucked in her beautifully starched skirts so that they would not be damaged by the wheel, then climbed in after her, and

the vehicle vanished down the road in a cloud of dust.

Betty watched them depart, a fine little wrinkle of anxiety deepening above her nose.

"I wonder if it was wise to let them go?" she murmured.

"Where are they going?" asked Bob, glancing up from the evening paper.

"Into town to attend a ball or something."

"They don't have balls in the Summer."

"*They* do. Mary asked me this morning if they might go after dinner was served. She said Thomas was to accompany her, but lacked the courage to ask my consent. They have promised to come home on the last train—at 1.10, I believe."

"They'll never catch it."

"But they *must*, Bobbie. Mary would not risk her reputation by staying away."

"I'll promise not to ask any questions if she only has my breakfast on time."

"Robert!" expostulated Mrs. Hargrave, in a tone which caused her husband to retire behind his newspaper.

But when the breakfast hour arrived the following morning there was no cheering odor of coffee to delight the nostrils, and Betty returned from an inspection of the kitchen with the appalling news that neither Mary nor Thomas was on duty.

Bobbie glanced at the clock, then out at the rain-drenched landscape.

"Ten o'clock! It's time they were here, even if they lost the late train last night. I think Mary might have tried to get here in time for breakfast; she knows how I rely on her for my coffee."

"Robert! She shall never return to this house. I will make the coffee, and then we'll go into town and try to get new help."

But Bobbie, with heroic self-sacrifice, said hastily that he would rather take a highball than allow Betty to go into the kitchen and make a slave of herself. So Betty and Virginia broke their fast

with a cup of tea and "pick-ups" from the tea-table, and about noon Mr. and Mrs. Hargrave, in spite of heavy weather, departed in the open car for the city, Betty declaring that they would not return until she had found at least a cook to bring back with them.

"I am going to try Japs this time," she announced. "Everyone who has tried them says they make the best servants. If I can get two they will do the entire work of the house, easily and smoothly, and—no elopements. I'll have no more love-making in my kitchen. Isn't it fortunate that we are without company, and even Burton gone into the city for a few days?"

Betty tied her hat down securely with several yards of veiling, and Bobbie buttoned her raincoat closely up to her chin.

"You are quite sure, dear, that you won't be afraid or lonely?" she said, turning to Virginia. "We will get back just as soon as possible, but if we *should* be a little late—after dark, you know, telephone for one of the neighbors to come over and keep you company."

"I shall not be lonely," said Virginia, and for a while she was inclined to enjoy the novelty of solitude.

Selecting a book from the shelves, she adjusted the pillows to her liking, and with a snug sense of comfort, augmented by the beating of the rain against the window-panes, she settled down for a long, lazy afternoon.

The storm increased in violence as the afternoon wore on. The wind shrieked wildly about the house, tearing and ripping at awnings, overturning the piazza chairs that, owing to the absence of Thomas, had not been stacked in a sheltered corner the night before. Virginia looked up and shivered as an unusually severe gust swept across the veranda and shook the window casings spitefully. Then she realized that it was growing too dark to read longer, so she threw aside her book and went to the window.

A swollen, angry sea was rolling in; great curling waves breaking in spray

over the wooden steps leading to the beach. Now and then a great roller higher than its fellows lifted its crest and flung itself far up the plateau. With a shudder of horror Virginia wondered, if the tide continued to rise, whether the cottage might not suffer, even be swept away; then comforted herself with the thought that it was a "house founded upon a rock."

"What an awful night!" she murmured. "I do wish Bob and Betty were home. It does not seem possible that they'll be able to get here through this storm."

The prospect of spending the night alone was not a cheerful one, but she determined not to give way to gloomy fears. So she drew the curtains and lighted the lamp, which cast a rosy glow about the room. "Ah, that is better!" she said softly, but glanced nervously into the corners. "It looks more homelike, but the shadows are dreadful!"

She went to the wide doorway leading into the hall, and peered into the cavernous darkness beyond with a sinking heart; then she drew the portieres, shutting out the darkness. Still she shivered, and discovering that the wind was penetrating under doors and casements, decided that a fire on the hearth would feel comfortable and add to the cheer of the room.

Paper and wood were already laid, awaiting the match, and in a few minutes they were crackling gloriously. Virginia knelt on the hearth, poker in hand, and with childish delight watched the flames sail up the wide maw of the chimney.

A step on the veranda caused her to start and glance apprehensively toward the long window opening on it. In the semi-gloom she discerned a man's figure coming toward the house. Too frightened to move, she still knelt by the fire, as without ceremony he pushed open the window and entered.

A great swirl of wind and rain followed him, and before he could close the window it had torn through the room, twirling and blowing out the curtains, swinging pictures out from the wall,

giving them a playful twist, and then slamming them violently back in their places.

Virginia stared, white and terrified, as the man advanced into the circle of firelight, the rain streaming from his cap and clothing. He flung off his cap and then she recognized Burton Walmsley.

The relief from fear was so great that she sprang to her feet, crying joyously:

"You! Oh, I'm so glad!"

There was no doubt in the sincerity of her welcome. Puzzled, but inclined to accept the goods the gods offered without question, Walmsley advanced with outstretched hands.

"Are you? So am I!" he cried impulsively.

Virginia retreated a step or two in embarrassment, but left one of her hands in his.

"I—I mean," she stammered lamely. "I'm glad it's no one worse. I—I thought you were a burglar."

"Oh!" ejaculated Walmsley weakly, feeling as if he had been dropped from a great height. So he had made an ass of himself again! He threw off his wet coat and seated himself in a chair by the fire, leaning toward its grateful warmth.

"I'm sorry I frightened you. But why did your thoughts run toward burglars at this hour? It is barely seven o'clock."

"I know, but you see I'm alone—that is, Bob and Betty are not here."

"Not at home! Why, where are they?"

"They went into town this morning in the motor-car, and haven't returned yet."

"Pretty nasty night for motoring. They will probably come back by train," said Walmsley.

"Probably."

There was a pause, and both stared into the glowing fire.

"Aren't you back sooner than you expected?" asked Virginia.

"Well, yes, rather. I intended to stay a week when I went away, but the city is simply beastly this weather—nothing going on but a lot of roof-gar-

dens, and one gets awfully tired of that sort of thing. To tell the truth, I got a bit homesick, so closed up my business and beat it for Pine Bluff."

"Oh!" Virginia stared into the fire, then realizing that her part of the conversation seemed to have become reduced to monosyllables, she added: "I'm sorry that Bob and Betty are not home, but I'm sure they'll be here in a few minutes."

There was another silence, which threatened to grow embarrassing in spite of the part taken by the friendly blaze. Walmsley pulled out his watch.

"I think I'll dress for dinner," he said. "Shall we have it at the usual time, or do you intend to wait for the folks?"

Virginia's cheeks turned very pink, and she stammered weakly:

"I think I'll wait—that is, dinner isn't ready—I mean, there's no one to get it."

Walmsley sat up very straight and stared at her.

"What! No one to cook it? Why, where's Mary?"

"Gone! And Billings, too. Yes," nodding in answer to Walmsley's stare; "they went into the city last night; got permission to attend a ball or something. They promised to come back on the last train, but we've seen nothing of them since. Betty has gone to look for new help. She says she will get Japanese servants this time."

"That's a good idea. There'll be no danger of anyone running away with them. I suppose Billings and Mary have eloped. I thought I had noticed a budding romance there. Great place for romance, Pine Bluff. The moonlight on the water goes to a fellow's head."

"I thought I had noticed that," said Virginia quietly.

Walmsley got up rather abruptly, and Virginia noticed that a warmer hue than the reflection of the firelight swept across his face. She enjoyed his discomfort, and began to feel thoroughly at ease.

Walmsley walked to the window and looked out on the stormy night.

"I don't believe those folks will get back tonight," he said.

"What!" cried Virginia, sitting up straight with horror.

"I mean—I don't think they are coming on this train," Walmsley hastened to reassure her. "And I'm dreadfully hungry. Won't you wrap up and come over to the hotel for dinner?"

A gale of unusual violence swept around the house at this moment, rattling shutters and casements as it went howling on its way. Virginia lifted her head and listened, then shook it, smiling.

"Not in that storm. I'm really not hungry. You go!"

But Walmsley also shook his head and resumed his seat by the fire.

"Not without you. We'll starve together," gloomily. Virginia laughed. "Don't treat the matter with levity; it is really very serious. Isn't there anything to eat in the house? Surely they left something. What have you done all day?"

"Oh, we picked up things. Betty and I made a cup of tea over the alcohol lamp, and Bob said they would get something when they arrived in town."

"That's pure selfishness. And to leave you alone, too!"

"That was the worst part of it. I was horribly frightened before you came."

Walmsley beamed. They were certainly getting along beautifully.

"Don't you think there might be some cold things in the pantry or ice-box that we could fix up? I am quite a famous cook—learned it in camp, you know."

"So am I," cried Virginia eagerly. Hunger was breaking down all barriers of reserve. "I can make fine chafing-dish things—learned it in college, you know."

They both laughed, and Virginia brought the chafing-dish from the sideboard.

"What are you going to make?" asked Walmsley.

"I don't know yet. Betty has a book of chafing-dish recipes somewhere," pulling out drawers and toss-

ing things about hurriedly. "Ah, here it is!"

Virginia brought the book to the light, and Walmsley looked over her shoulder as she turned the leaves, reading aloud:

"Stewed lambs' kidneys in sherry wine—h'm, that's good, but too much trouble. 'Creamed chicken'—'creamed oysters'—they're both good. Which would you prefer," she asked gravely, her eyes looking earnestly into his, "creamed oysters or creamed chicken?"

"Either is good," said Walmsley cautiously. "But don't you think it would be wise to find out first if we have any chicken or oysters to cream?"

Virginia laughed to hide her embarrassment, and a delicious pink crept up to her ears. "Oh, that's so. How stupid of me!"

"If you'll get that thing working," said Walmsley, indicating the chafing-dish, "I'll go and inspect the ice-box."

Virginia filled and lighted the alcohol lamp, and in a few minutes Walmsley returned from the kitchen, his arms filled with packages.

"Oh!" cried Virginia joyously, "what a lot of stuff! What did you find?"

"Nothing very appetizing," said Walmsley, depositing his bundles. "There was a lot of cold stuff that you couldn't make anything of except hash. I think Mary must have been a very wasteful servant."

"I wouldn't say a word if she were only here now," murmured Virginia.

"I was coming away in despair when I found this hunk of cheese. We are saved! We can make a famous Welsh rabbit; and here's a bottle of olives and a box of crackers."

"Just the thing! Oh, what splendid luck! Now, we must have a lot of little things to go in the rabbit. Let me see," referring to the book of recipes, "mustard—vinegar—Fetch them from the sideboard, and I'll mix them up while you grate the cheese."

"I'll make it," said Walmsley cheerfully. "They say I make a fine rabbit."

"No; I'll make it," said Virginia decidedly. "Everyone at college said

I made the best rabbit of anyone in the school."

"Oh, well, if you won't play unless you can be mother, go ahead," said Walmsley good-naturedly. It was all such a delicious make-believe, and they were getting along so nicely.

"I'll go and look for some ale."

"What for?" demanded Virginia severely.

"Why—er—just to mix the rabbit with."

"Very well; but we will drink coffee. I don't like the smell of ale. I wonder," thoughtfully, "I wonder if we could boil a kettle on the logs? There's no fire in the kitchen."

"Sure thing. I'll go and get the kettle."

Walmsley made another expedition to the kitchen, returning with a kettle in one hand and coffee-pot in the other. Swinging the kettle on the end of the poker, he placed it on the logs. Virginia watched him admiringly.

"Doesn't this remind you of 'Cousin Kate'?" she said, and then turned away abruptly, as she recalled the sentimental scene enacted in the play while the kettle was boiling. But Walmsley did not, apparently, share her embarrassment.

"Yes; that was a pretty scene," he said.

"You may mix the rabbit," said Virginia graciously. "I'm going to set another table. This one is too crowded."

Removing a jar of flowers from a small stand, she placed it within the circle of firelight. Covering it with a small cloth, she laid places for two, setting beside each plate a rose-shaded candle. When she had lighted them, and their soft glow added to the ruby light of the fire, she stepped off with head critically on one side. Walmsley looked up.

"That looks wonderfully cozy," he said, then added, "I think this is about done. Shall I bring it over there?"

"Yes, please. I have left a place for it. Oh, the coffee! The kettle is boiling furiously. How will we ever get it off the fire?"

With the long-handled poker Walmsley calmly lifted the kettle from the glowing logs and, using his handkerchief as a holder, filled the coffee-pot and brought it to the table.

"How easily you do things!" exclaimed Virginia admiringly.

"I told you I was an accomplished cook," he said, smiling.

When they were seated at the little table Virginia looked about her with a glad air of contentment. "Isn't this charming!" she cried.

"Great!" said Walmsley. It certainly was charming, and the homelike air, the cozy warmth within, while the storm raged without, the presence of the sweet-faced girl opposite, was going to his head a little. "Quite like a honeymoon, don't you think so?"

"I don't know, I never had one," said Virginia dreamily; then realizing what she had said she blushed and added hastily, "I mean, I don't fancy a honeymoon would be half so nice. People always travel and go to hotels, where they have a waiter standing behind their chair."

Then Walmsley took a reckless plunge. He reached across the table and placed his hand gently over Virginia's as it rested on the cloth.

"We won't have any waiters on our honeymoon."

"On *our* honeymoon!" echoed Virginia, too astounded by his audacity to withdraw her hand.

"Yes, *our* honeymoon. We will go away together and find a little cottage on a bluff, without any servants, and while the wind howls in the chimney and the rain beats against the windows we will make Welsh rabbit in a chafing-dish and our coffee on the logs. And we'll sup at a little table—such a tiny little table that we can hold hands across it—and the rose of the candles will burn in your cheeks, and the glow of the fire shine in your eyes——"

Virginia withdrew her hand quietly. "Will you have coffee, Mr. Walmsley?" she asked coolly.

Walmsley drew back. The rebuff was effectual. Virginia lifted the coffee-pot with much dignity and poured

out a colorless fluid. In a moment her frigidity of demeanor vanished. She set the pot down and clapped her hands softly, her eyes sparkling with merriment.

"What is the matter?" asked Walmsley stiffly.

"You forgot to put in the coffee!"

Walmsley leaned across the table and peered incredulously into the cup.

"By Jove! So I did," he admitted. Then they laughed together and good-fellowship was restored.

Walmsley retired to the kitchen in search of the coffee, and Virginia heard a furious rattling among the dishes and pans, attesting to the earnestness of his efforts. He returned triumphant a few minutes later, coffee canister and spoon in hand.

Virginia was kneeling on the hearth, having replaced the kettle on the logs. "How many?" asked Walmsley, spoon in hand.

A sharp rap on the long window opening on the veranda startled them. Virginia's thoughts still ran to burglars, and for a moment she remained motionless, staring at the window. Walmsley also hesitated, but other thoughts than those of burglars filled his mind.

A sharper and louder rap recalled them to the fact that someone desired admission. Virginia sprang to her feet.

"It's Betty!" she cried joyously, and before Walmsley could reach the window she had flung it wide open.

Accompanied by a rush of wind and driving rain a shrouded and hooded figure stepped into the room and closed the window hastily. She threw back her hood as she advanced into the room, and the lamplight fell upon her fair hair and mischievous, laughing face.

Virginia drew back in dismay. "Mrs. Clevenger!" she faltered.

X

WITH MRS. CLEVINGER AS CHAPERON

WALMSLEY, taken by surprise, muttered something hastily, then recovering his usual good temper and good

manners, he advanced to meet their visitor.

"You were certainly brave to venture out in the storm," he said, relieving her of her long raincoat.

"Not half so brave as I would have been to remain at the hotel," she answered. "I got horribly wet coming over, but I would have gone through a deluge joyously to get away."

Divested of her wraps Mrs. Clevenger stood forth, glittering in a gown of jet sequins, which caught and reflected the lamp and candlelight. She walked to the fireplace and lifted one tiny, suède-shod foot to the blaze.

"My shoes are like paper, and I wore no galoshes, but your candlelight looked so inviting that I couldn't resist running over. You fortunate people who have a home can't imagine the horror of a hotel parlor on a rainy evening. All the old tabbies sit around and claw and spit at each other. No one dare leave the room for fear of being torn to pieces as soon as her back is turned. So they sit there, sleepy and cross, until the porter comes in to turn out the lights. It took a great deal of courage to come away; I suppose I haven't a rag of reputation left."

"Let us hope that they have found a fresh victim by this time," said Walmsley.

Mrs. Clevenger did not respond. With a comprehensive sweep of her lowered lids she had taken in the meaning of the little table with its rose-colored candles and the kettle singing merrily on the logs.

"How cozy you look!" she said softly. "Supper for two?"

"No, for three," said Virginia quietly, laying another plate. "Mr. Walmsley, will you please place a chair for Mrs. Clevenger?"

It was the first time Virginia had spoken since Mrs. Clevenger broke in upon their tête-à-tête, and her voice sounded strained even to herself.

Mrs. Clevenger took the proffered chair. "No, thank you; I never eat rabbit; besides, I have just dined. Have you anything to drink besides coffee?"

"Why—er—yes," said Walmsley. "What would you like?"

She leaned toward him with a coaxing gesture, and cast a comical look toward Virginia, half doubtful and half daring. "Mix me a cocktail, there's a good boy."

"Certainly," said Walmsley blandly; but he hesitated and glanced at Virginia. She pretended neither to have seen nor heard, but Walmsley fancied that her eyebrows were raised the merest fraction in disdain as he moved reluctantly toward the sideboard.

Mrs. Clevenger leaned carelessly on the table, scrutinizing Virginia's downcast face. Then she looked inquiringly about the room.

"Where's Betty?" she asked abruptly.

Virginia started and flushed guiltily, but Walmsley answered laconically from the sideboard:

"In town."

"In town! Such a night as this? And Bobbie?"

"In town," replied Walmsley again, in the same tone.

Mrs. Clevenger glanced from Virginia's downcast face to Walmsley's impenetrable back, and drawled maliciously, "How fun-ny!"

Walmsley shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm afraid they won't think so. It's a beastly night to travel."

"Did they go in the motor-car?" pursued Mrs. Clevenger.

"Yes; they started out quite early, I believe. We expect them back at any moment."

"Wouldn't it be unfortunate if they had a breakdown?"

Virginia rose hastily and turned toward the fire, pretending to replenish it.

"Yes, it would be rather nasty," assented Walmsley cheerfully, bringing the drinks to the table; "they'd get so muddled. Won't you join us, Miss Hasbrouck?"

"No, thank you," said Virginia, still with averted face.

Mrs. Clevenger raised her glass and touched it against Walmsley's, smiling into his eyes audaciously.

"Here's to the return of happy days," she said softly.

"Do they ever return?" asked Walmsley.

Virginia went back to the table and resumed her seat with a murmured apology.

"So you've banished the servants!" Mrs. Clevenger looked straight at Virginia, who flushed guiltily. "It is much nicer, of course, to wait upon yourselves, especially as you were tête-à-tête. But why are you eating Welsh rabbit at this ungodly hour?"

Walmsley pulled out his watch and looked at it absently.

"Eh? Oh, yes; it is early." Then, recovering, he explained blandly:

"Why, you see Thomas—you know? Nice fellow! He has sprained his ankle and can't serve. That's what took Betty into town, to get a man to fill his place; just temporarily, you know."

"What's the matter with Mary?"

"Mary? Oh, Mary is a nice girl, and fine cook, but got a nasty temper. She declared she would not wait on table, so there you are—I mean here we are. No use having dinner cooked and no one to serve it, so Miss Hasbrouck and I just scraped some things together for ourselves—quite informally, you know."

"Yes, I see; quite informally."

Mrs. Clevenger turned and looked at Walmsley between narrowed lids, and he wondered why he had never noticed before how much her eyes were like a cat's.

"Haven't you anything to eat but Welsh rabbit?" she asked, after a moment's silence, during which Walmsley returned her gaze with the innocent stare of a child. "I declare I'm hungry. Those boarding-house dinners have no staying qualities. I wonder if Mary could find me a bit of cold meat or chicken if I went into the kitchen and talked sweetly to her!"

Virginia gave a little gasp, but Walmsley arose with admirable composure. "Let me interview her," he said.

But Mrs. Clevenger had also risen, and was moving toward the kitchen

door. "Oh, don't trouble, pray!" she said quickly. "Let me go myself; I just love a kitchen."

"You would not love ours with Mary in her present temper," said Walmsley, quietly intercepting her. "I really wouldn't advise you to go in. I'm the only one that can manage her when she's in one of these spells."

Walmsley disappeared behind the tall Japanese screen, and the kitchen door opened and shut loudly. Mrs. Clevenger resumed her seat.

"How strange!" in a musing tone; "I never heard Betty speak of Mary's temper."

"Didn't you?" stammered Virginia in confusion. She was finding it difficult to prevaricate successfully. "Well, it's only when things go wrong. You see, she's upset about Thomas."

There was a pause, in which Virginia poked nervously at the rabbit on her plate, feeling Mrs. Clevenger's eyes upon her flaming cheeks. After what seemed to her an eternity Walmsley returned, bearing a tray, on which was some cold meat and a salad.

"This is all I could find," he said cheerfully, placing the tray on the table. "Do you think you can make out?"

Mrs. Clevenger looked up in his face, a roguish smile curving her lips. "All you could find?" she queried softly, with a strong emphasis on the pronoun.

"Yes. I had to find things for myself. Mary's in a nasty temper—wouldn't do anything for me."

"So your soothing influence failed this time. She's very quiet in her anger. I didn't hear her voice."

"Yes; she's sulky now. Won't speak to me."

Virginia turned her head hastily aside and choked a little. Mrs. Clevenger helped herself to the meat, and then looked over the table with a perturbed air.

"Oh, dear! I'm sorry to be so troublesome, but you have forgotten to bring bread."

Walmsley sprang up.

"Let me get it for myself," said Mrs. Clevenger, laying a detaining hand on

his arm. "Really, I insist. I'm not afraid. Mary always liked me."

"I wouldn't have you go in there for the world," said Walmsley hastily, while Virginia flushed and paled with fear. "Let me go," she said quickly.

"No, indeed!" Walmsley's voice was very determined. "I won't even permit you to venture, Miss Hasbrouck. I really wouldn't answer for the consequences."

Once again the door closed behind him, and silence reigned for a moment. Then it was broken by a loud crash, as of breaking china, followed by the violent slamming of a door. Virginia sprang to her feet as Walmsley reentered the room.

"What is the matter?" she cried.

"She's gone!" announced Walmsley solemnly.

"Gone!" echoed Mrs. Clevenger and Virginia in unison. "Who?"

"Mary. She flew into a rage and said she was tired of having me coming into her kitchen. I tried to pacify her, she would not listen, and after smashing some of the crockery, put on her things and went out, slamming the door behind her. Here's the bread, Mrs. Clevenger, secured at the risk of my life."

Mrs. Clevenger smiled her wide, impish smile, displaying her superb teeth.

"I admire your bravado, Burton. You really excel as an actor and romancer. You tell a story remarkably well, my dear boy, but seem to forget that I have some little skill in that line myself. I chanced to be at the station this morning when Mr. and Mrs. Hargrave went in to town."

She paused, and Virginia paled a little, but Walmsley courteously waited for her to proceed. She did so.

"You may not be aware that, finding the roads in bad condition, they left the machine in the sheds opposite the station and continued the trip by train? Betty not only told me that they were going in to town for the day, but *why* they were going. So your little story, my dear Prince Ananias, of Billings's sprained ankle and Mary's bad temper was very amusing, especially so as I

happened to know the facts. But," turning to Virginia, "I am surprised at you—such a truthful little girl!—to aid and abet him in his prevarication!"

With the air of one who realizes that further subterfuge is useless, and is, on the whole, rather glad of it, Walmsley flung himself into a chair by the fire, and, with provoking coolness, lighted a cigarette.

"My dear Mrs. Clevenger," he drawled, "a harmless lie is sometimes preferable to a malicious truth."

Mrs. Clevenger turned upon him rather sharply. "Then this is one of the times when the truth is not desirable. Oh," shaking her finger playfully, "how very, very naughty!"

Virginia had risen, and now stood, her hands grasping the back of a chair, her face very white, as she met Mrs. Clevenger's cynical smile.

"It is such women as you," she said, her voice low with suppressed passion, "such women as you, with evil minds and malicious tongues, that sometimes render a lie pardonable."

Mrs. Clevenger flushed slightly, and then laughed disagreeably.

"My dear child, don't lose your temper and say nasty things. I admit it was too bad to spoil your charming tête-à-tête, and I hardly blame you for being vexed. But, really, you misjudge me. My intentions were the very best, but I could not resist getting a little amusement out of the affair. It was too funny!" laughing mischievously at the recollection.

"I thought you were alone, and ran over to keep you company, but I found you so well taken care of that my company was not needed. Now, I must really go back. My reputation would not be worth a button if I remained away without full and complete explanation, but you had better come with me."

Virginia looked at her, coldly inquiring. "I don't understand you," she said, with the tips of her lips.

"Listen to me! I don't believe Bob and Betty will reach home tonight, and you can't remain here. You had better put on your wraps and come over to the hotel with me."

"No, thank you," said Virginia icily.

"Let me urge you to accept Mrs. Clevenger's suggestion," said Walmsley in a low tone.

"I shall remain here," said Virginia decidedly, the red in her cheeks flaming to scarlet.

"I don't think you realize how imprudent it would be to stay here alone," said Mrs. Clevenger in a serious tone. "There are burglars in the neighborhood. They visited Mrs. Glastonbury's cottage last night and escaped with five thousand dollars' worth of jewelry."

Virginia's red cheeks paled, and her eyes looked black with fear, but she remained firm. "I will stay here," she said in a tone that seemed to forbid argument, and she walked toward the window; but Walmsley followed her.

"I wish you would go, Miss Hasbrouck. Please—for my sake," he pleaded in low tones.

Virginia regarded him haughtily, but answered in the same low tones.

"Do you think I could accept that woman's hospitality—after her awful insinuations? I would rather die."

"It is on account of those very insinuations that I want you to go. Oh, won't you please understand? You need not accept her hospitality. Go as a guest of the hotel, but let her chaperon you, and I will return here in case Bob and Betty come back."

But Virginia was obstinate. "I shall remain here. You may go where you choose."

Mrs. Clevenger trailed her glittering robes across the room, and stood beside Walmsley.

"Don't try to influence Miss Hasbrouck against her judgment," she said. "I merely suggested what I thought to be the wisest course, but if she prefers to remain here, why"—pausing, with an eloquent shrug—"she knows what she is doing. But I can't stay any longer. My cloak, Burton, please."

Walmsley brought Mrs. Clevenger's cloak and wrapped it about her gravely, silently. Then he flung himself into

his own coat, and went toward the window. There he paused and addressed Virginia very deliberately.

"If the folks return, Miss Hasbrouck, will you kindly tell them that I have escorted Mrs. Clevenger to the hotel, and will go back to town by the last train?"

Mrs. Clevenger also turned to make a last appeal.

"You are quite sure you won't change your mind and come with me?"

But Virginia replied frigidly, "I am quite sure."

"As you will." Mrs. Clevenger moved toward the window; she laughed tantalizingly. "How brave you are!" she said, in mock admiration. Then she passed out, followed by Burton Walmsley.

XI

BURGLARS

WHEN they had gone Virginia drew the curtains across the window through which they had passed with an angry jerk that sent the rings clashing. As she crossed the room a chair stood in her way, and she gave the unoffending thing a vicious little kick.

On the floor, close to Mrs. Clevenger's place at the table, lay a package of Egyptian cigarettes where she had evidently dropped them. Virginia stooped, and picking them up with the tips of her fingers, flung them among the dying embers. She watched them flame up with grim satisfaction.

"What a cat that woman is!" she cried. "How dare she—how dare she question my actions?"

She stormed up and down the room like a little fury, then dropped into a chair and sobbed, weakly, hysterically. When her anger had spent itself in tears she sat up and dried her eyes, feeling very small and foolish and ashamed of herself.

"How silly I am!" she murmured. "Why should I care what she thinks or says? Betty was right—she isn't even respectable. I wonder," pensively, "I

wonder what Mr. Walmsley thinks?" Then she raised her head with a proud little gesture. "But why should I care what *he* thinks either? Although—he was very nice before that woman came." She smiled softly and her eyes grew tender as she recalled the scene in the firelight. "He is much too nice for her," she said, and rising, she went to the mirror and studied her reflection critically. "Much too nice for her," she repeated.

Another gust of wind shrilled around the house, and Virginia retreated to the fireplace, glancing fearfully about her. "How lonely it is!" she murmured. "If Bob and Betty would only come."

She sat quite still for a few minutes, staring into the dying fire. Then a noise, soft and muffled, but surely of a footstep on the veranda, came to her ears and she sat upright, her flesh creeping. She rose to her feet and stood, straining her ears to listen. Gathering her courage she tiptoed to the window and, drawing a corner of the curtain aside, peered cautiously out into the gloom.

As her eyes became accustomed to the darkness she discovered a man's figure, its back toward her, but within a few feet of the window. She drew back, faint with horror, and clutched at the back of a chair for support.

"What shall I do?" she whispered. "Oh, why—why did I stay alone?"

Softly she crept to the doorway leading into the hall, with the half-defined intention of going upstairs and locking herself in one of the upper rooms. But even as she was about to draw the portières another noise smote her ears, a faint clicking that seemed to come from a more distant part of the house.

"The kitchen window! There are more of them, and they must know that I'm alone. Perhaps they'll murder me. Oh, what shall I do?"

There was a moment of silence and intolerable suspense, then came a sliding sound as of a window being cautiously raised. Virginia retreated to the centre of the room and looked about wildly for a hiding-place. There was none. Her glance fell on the dis-

ordered table, with the remnants of the interrupted repast. "If I were brave like 'Miss Civilization,'" she murmured, "I suppose I'd invite them in to supper. I wonder if they'd like cold rabbit!"

She began to laugh, softly, but hysterically, then calmed herself, with an awful feeling that she might be losing her reason.

Stealthy footsteps crept along the hall, and there was a sliding sound, as of a body pressed against a wall. Outside the doorway the footsteps halted and Virginia heard a sibilant whisper from behind the portières. She felt that whoever it was behind those curtains was peering at her through the folds, and her flesh went icy, her joints paralyzed. She felt herself powerless as if in the grip of a nightmare. Then with a mighty effort she shook off the numb terror that held her, and springing to the window she flung it wide, screaming wildly for help.

The muffled figure that had first aroused her fears turned at her cry and sprang into the room. Then she found that she was in Burton Walmsley's arms, and clinging frantically to him. He was very wet, but was real, substantial and protecting.

"What is the matter?" he cried. "Quick—tell me!"

"There!" gasped Virginia, pointing with a shaking hand toward the portières. "Behind there!"

Disengaging himself from her clinging arms Walmsley rushed toward the curtains and tore them apart. The light from the room revealed the dim figures of a man and a woman creeping stealthily up the stairs.

"What are you doing here?" demanded Walmsley sternly. "Come down at once."

Obediently the figures descended and entered the room. Water dripped from their clothing, from their hair and from their hat-brims, and ran in zigzag streams across the rugs. As they advanced sheepishly into the lamplight, Virginia, after an incredulous stare, dropped into a chair and laughed weakly, while Walmsley

glared at them in mute amazement. It was hard to recognize in this dilapidated, rain-soaked pair the couple that had gone forth so gaily the day before, Mary of the stiffly starched petticoats, Billings of the neat tweeds and immaculate linen.

"What does this mean?" demanded Walmsley. Each looked foolishly at the other as they stood, hand in hand, but neither answered. "Speak!" in sharp command. "What do you mean by sneaking into this house like thieves in the dead of night?"

Then Mary found her voice.

"We're not thieves, Mr. Walmsley," she answered pertly. "We're honest, respectable servants returning to our duties. I know we're a little late, but— You explain, Thomas."

Thomas seemed to feel the loss of his dignity keenly. His disheveled appearance, in fact, the whole situation, was embarrassing to him, but he answered respectfully:

"If you will permit me, sir, I'll try to explain. I know things look very bad, but really we've done no 'arm. The truth is, sir, as you may know, that this young lady and myself got permission to go into the city to attend a ball, and that we promised to return on the last train. Well, we didn't leave 'ere until after we'd served dinner, which made it pretty late when we got to the gatherin', and heverything was so pleasant that it seemed no time at all before we discovered that we'd lost hour train. Mary was all broke up, sir, and began to cry, which Hi couldn't stand seein'." Here Billings glanced affectionately at Mary, who cast her eyes down coyly and traced the pattern of the rug with the toe of a very muddy shoe. "Some of 'er lady friends offered to take 'er 'ome with them, but she said she'd never be willin' to come back an' face you all with a doubt on 'er character, so to speak. So, as we'd been keepin' company on the quiet for some time, I proposed that we get married an' come back respectable. I hopes you don't object, miss?" turning to Virginia.

"Oh, no, indeed," said Virginia cordially. "I'm delighted! Let me congratulate you," and she shook each wet hand warmly. Mary simpered, but Thomas still looked anxious. "Do you think Mrs. 'Argrave will mind, miss?"

"Oh, I forgot about the Japs," said Virginia, turning to Walmsley.

But Walmsley was optimistic and responded cheerfully: "That will be all right. You can talk it over with Mrs. Hargrave tomorrow. By the way, Billings, why didn't you come back this morning? You'd have saved a lot of trouble all 'round."

"Well, you see, sir, since we'd stayed over our time, we thought we might as well stay a while longer, so we took a little weddin' trip. We went to Coney Island, sir. It was beautiful! We didn't mean to sneak in so stealthy like, but when we got to the station all the carriages an' 'busses was taken, an' we was hoblged to walk. Mrs. B. felt a little sensitive about being seen so dilapidated, an' 'er a bride, so we thought we could steal in quietly an' no one be any the wiser. When we finds the 'ouse locked an' in darkness—the curtains bein' drawn, you know—we presumed the folks 'ad all retired, so we just lifts the kitchen window an' slips in. I 'opes you'll pardon us, miss, for givin' you a fright. Permit me to say good night, miss. Good night, sir.

Taking his bride by the hand, Thomas turned to go, and Virginia dropped into a chair, laughing softly. Walmsley took a turn up and down the room, then went to the foot of the stairs and called after the retreating figures:

"Oh—er—Thomas!"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you ask Mrs.—er—Billings, when she has laid off her wraps, to come down and make a cup of coffee for Miss Hasbrouck? It has been rather a trying day for her."

"Very well, sir."

"Why did you do that?" asked Virginia reproachfully.

"Because I want to talk to you, and I thought you might let me stay

and have a cup of coffee with you since there is a matron in the house to act as chaperon. There is so much that I want to say to you, and the evening has been rather broken up."

Virginia laughed. "It certainly has, and as I have twice mistaken you for a burglar, I suppose I must make some concession. You may stay and have coffee with me."

Given permission Walmsley removed his raincoat and took the seat Virginia indicated opposite her own.

"So you were the dreadful creature I saw on the veranda!" she said, smiling. "Tell me," curiously, "what brought you back just at that time?"

"I decided to return because I didn't like the idea of your being here alone, especially after what Mrs. Clevenger said about the burglar scare. It was my intention to mount guard on the piazza until the folks came home. While aware that I could not save you from being frightened, still I felt that I would be near you in case of real danger. And to think," angrily, "of that pair of idiots outwitting me by slipping in through the kitchen window while I was patrolling the piazza! And then, when I had a chance to do the heroic, to have it turn out a farce! Isn't it enough to make a man hide his head with shame?"

Virginia laughed merrily, her eyes crinkling up at the corners in the way Walmsley adored. "Never mind. I thank you for the good intention. If you had not come to my assistance when I called for help I think I should have gone insane with fear. I should never have had the courage to draw those curtains myself."

"I'm glad if my presence saved your feelings in any way." Walmsley leaned forward and placed his hand softly on Virginia's as it rested on the wide arm of her chair. "There is something I want to say to you while I have the opportunity. I have been trying to find one for a week past, but the fates have not been kind. Will you forgive me for speaking now? There is a great deal to say; much to be explained, but before we are interrupted

again I want to ask you if you will be my wife?"

Virginia started slightly at the abrupt question, and her cheeks glowed more deeply, but after a silence in which Walmsley heard the clock in the corner tick measuredly thrice, she answered quietly, "No, Mr. Walmsley."

"Why?"

"Must I give a reason?"

Walmsley's face was set and rather white, but his tone was very quiet.

"A man is justified in demanding one when a woman gives him a curt 'no.'"

"I did not mean that it should be curt, and I don't think you ought to ask me for a reason, but since you are my cousin's cousin, and have been kind to me, I will give you one, and I think it is sufficient—Mrs. Clevenger."

Her reply was evidently as unexpected as his question had been, and for a moment Walmsley's self-possession forsook him. He rose abruptly, and walked to the window, where he stood for a moment, staring out into the darkness with a perplexed frown. Then he turned and faced Virginia.

"Aren't you aware," he said, "that Mrs. Clevenger already has a husband?"

"Yes, but that fact has not prevented you from spending all your time in her society."

"I have always considered Mrs. Clevenger a good comrade—a jolly good fellow, as Bob says, and no one questions a man's friendship with a married woman in these days. It is thought nothing of."

Virginia repeated his words slowly. "Is thought nothing of! What a strange world I have discovered." She sat silent for a few minutes, watching the flames leaping about the logs, and when she spoke again it was in a reminiscent tone.

"In the little Southern town that is my home the women are gentle and womanly and, like my mother and Cousin Betty, are happy and satisfied in their husbands' devotion. But this Mrs. Clevenger is different—different from anyone I ever knew. Two weeks

ago, the night of my party, you know, she monopolized Philip Gordon's attentions, although she knew he was engaged to Helen, and then—well, I may as well tell you—I saw you kiss her that night."

Walmsley flushed, but his eyes did not waver before Virginia's direct glance. "I can't deny it, but was that anything criminal?"

"No, not criminal, but it was dishonorable, if you meant nothing." Virginia's eyes looked straight into his, calmly accusing. "And if you did, why do you now ask me to be your wife?"

"Because I love you. I don't know what to say; in fact, I can't say anything. A man can't explain those things without being a cad, but won't you trust me and believe that I love you—you—you!"

"And do you think I value such love? Do your kisses mean nothing? They may mean something to her—" Walmsley made an impatient gesture, but Virginia continued in stern denunciation: "Men are so thoughtless. You win a woman's love carelessly, and forget it just as lightly. You have led Mrs. Clevenger to believe that you love her, and now presume to offer your love to me. I want none of it."

"Virginia! You are unkind. Won't you see the difference between that and my love for you?"

"I see no difference. Perhaps it is because I am not versed in the arts of love-making. I only know that you have pretended to love one woman, and are now making protestations to me. Please don't speak of it again."

She rose with an air of dismissal, and Walmsley came toward her, searching her eyes for some sign of relenting. "Is that all?"

"That is all." Her voice was a little faint, and she turned her head away.

Walmsley waited, watching her averted face. She looked sweet and fair and flowerlike with the firelight playing about her, and Walmsley's impulse was strong to take her in his arms and compel her love. Instead he gathered up his raincoat and cap,

and moved toward the window. There he paused again.

"Good night."

"Good night," she answered without turning her head.

When the window had closed behind him, and the wind had shrilled away into silence, she still stood motionless where he had left her. Billings, in dry raiment, entered the room, bearing a tray, and interrupted her reverie.

"Shall I serve the coffee, miss?"

XII

THE END OF MRS. CLEVENGER'S CAREER

MR. AND MRS. HARGRAVE returned the same night to Pine Bluff by a later train, but without the Japs. Their search for efficient help had been unsuccessful, so the truants, Thomas and Mary, were forgiven and blessed, and restored to their former positions of honor. They, in turn, graciously promised to remain in Mrs. Hargrave's service during her stay at Pine Bluff, after which, Mary intimated, it was her intention to cook for a family of two.

The morning following the storm was clear and bright, with a touch of crispness in the air that was very grateful after the long spell of sultry weather.

Burton Walmsley came out of the city by one of the early-morning trains, and drove over from the station in a public conveyance. As he turned in at the gates of the cottage, although his mood was not in accord with the beauty of the day, it occurred to him that Pine Bluff had never looked more charming. The lawns and shrubs had been washed until each blade and leaf glittered in the sunlight a lustrous, Irish green; the drives were brown and still moist, and smelt sweet and damp. Between the trees he caught glimpses of the sea, vividly, intensely, brilliantly blue.

He had been strongly inclined to remain away from Pine Bluff after the rather embarrassing scenes of the previous evening, but beneath his calm

exterior was a stubborn determination to win Virginia Hasbrouck's love; to make her believe in him in spite of appearances which now led her to think him, according to her girlish ideals, dishonorable and that most despicable of living things, a male flirt.

In the living-room, which at first appeared to be empty, Walmsley found Billings arranging the silver on the side-board.

"Hello, Thomas!" he called cheerfully. "Breakfast over?"

"Good morning, sir," replied Thomas. "It is, sir. You are a little late, but Mary will be pleased to get you something. A grilled chop, sir? I believe the coffee and rolls are still 'ot."

Walmsley flung himself into a chair and picked up the morning paper. Thomas coughed apologetically. "Your pardon, sir. I forgot. 'Ere's a letter for you. It was left about an hour ago by a boy from the Fair View 'Ouse."

"From Mrs. Clevenger!" Walmsley's face darkened a little when he recognized the familiar handwriting, and recalled the rather disagreeable part the lady had played the night before. "I wonder what she's up to now!"

MY DEAR BURTON: [he read] I am going away; in fact, I will be gone by the time you receive this letter. ["Thank heaven!" he exclaimed devoutly.] This will doubtless be as much a surprise to you as it was to me. It was my intention to tell you last evening, but other things drove it from my mind. I received a letter from George yesterday, saying that his doctor had ordered him to take an ocean trip. Of course I could not let him go without me, so packed at once and leave on the 11.08 train for New York.

I am sorry to leave you in this way, and want to thank you for contributing to a very delightful Summer, but, of course, duty calls me to my husband's side—the poor, dear boy needs me so much—and I obey.

Faithfully yours,
SALLY CLEVINGER.

Walmsley twirled the letter between his fingers and laughed softly. "I wonder what's behind it all! Her wifely duty! When Sally Clevenger talks of duty you may bet your life there's something doing. Well, whatever it is I shall look upon it as a merciful intervention of divine Providence.

Here endeth the career of Mrs. Clevenger—so far as I am interested. The queen is dead—" then very tenderly, "Long live the queen."

The sound of heavy footfalls descending the stairs interrupted Walmsley's soliloquy, and he looked up as Bob Hargrave entered the room.

Hargrave wore a fisherman's hat at the back of his head; his hands were thrust deep into the pockets of a very baggy pair of crash trousers, and his infantile brow was puckered with a great determination. It cleared when he saw Walmsley, and he grinned cheerfully.

"Hello, Burt! Why didn't you wait for us last night? We got home about 12.30—beastly night. Virginia said you'd been home and gone away again—propriety, or some such rot—makes me tired. I say, have you seen anything of my fishing-pole? I put it somewhere a few days ago, and I'll be blest if I can find it."

"Oh, hang your fishing-pole! You are just the one I want to see. I'm in trouble and want your assistance. Mrs. Clevenger has gone away!"

Bobbie's round face fell sympathetic-ally. "Why, that's too bad, old man. Rather sudden, wasn't it? I'll miss her myself. Things won't be the same without her."

"I hope not," said Walmsley impatiently.

Bob stared at his cousin incredulously through his glasses. "You *hope* not? Then what in thunder—?"

Walmsley interrupted rather testily.

"I do wish, Bob, that you and—others would get the idea that I'm in love with Mrs. Clevenger clean out of your heads. I know that sounds beastly caddish, but I've simply got to straighten things out."

"But I always thought—in fact, everyone thought you were awfully gone on Sally Clevenger."

"Well, I'll tell you something, if you can't see what's under your very nose—I'm in love with your cousin, Virginia Hasbrouck, and I'm going to marry her if she'll give me the ghost of a chance."

Bobbie's little round eyes threatened to pop from their sockets, and his face showed strong signs of apoplexy. "Virginia! Why—I hadn't the least idea—what will Betty say?"

"I don't care a hang what Betty says!" cried Walmsley angrily, pacing up and down the long room, "or what you say," speaking more loudly, "or what Mrs. Clevenger says. I love Virginia, and I'm going to marry her in spite of you all if she'll have me."

"Well, go ahead and marry her, and don't shout so about it. I don't care." And Bob, with an assumption of dignity, continued the search for his fishing-pole, noisily rattling canes and umbrellas in the corner of the settle.

Walmsley followed him.

"Forgive me for losing my temper, old man, but I'm in no end of a scrape. Virginia has got it into her head that I'm either dreadfully in love with Mrs. Clevenger or have been trifling with her, and—you know what strong ideas she has of honor and all that sort of thing—she has turned me down. I—well, I admit that I made an ass of myself the night of the dance, and Virginia saw it." Bob puckered his lips into a whistle. "She seems to think I can't back out honorably."

"Kissed her, I suppose," Bob chuckled. "Well, if I felt compelled to marry every girl I've kissed, I'd have to move to Salt Lake City."

Walmsley regarded him sternly. "I should think you'd be ashamed instead of making a boast of it. Does Betty know what a past you've had?"

"Oh, no," hastily, "I wouldn't have Betty know for the world. That was before I met her. What can I do to help you?"

"I hardly know. I've just received a letter from Mrs. Clevenger, in which she throws me over in the coolest manner imaginable. If Virginia could only see it, I think she would be convinced that Mrs. Clevenger does not care a button for me, but I couldn't possibly show it to her."

"Why not lose it where she will find it?" suggested Bob guilelessly.

"She wouldn't read it."

"Well—er—perhaps if you lost it, and I found it, I could read it to her, carelessly, you know, as if I didn't know who it belonged to."

"No—no, Bob," said Walmsley, laughing, "it wouldn't work. Miss Hasbrouck is a girl who spells HONOR with capitals."

"I know it, and those women are so damned hard to manage," said Bob dubiously. "She'd see through me as if I were a pane of glass, and make me feel like a run-over cent, if I tried to tell her any fairy-tales."

"I don't want you to, Bob. If I can't win her by fair means and square, I'll try to be man enough to lose without squealing. But I'm not going to lose her while there's a fighting chance left."

"That's right, old man. That's the way I like to hear a man talk. Why," drawing himself up, and trying to look fierce in spite of the fisherman's hat, "if anyone had stood in my way when I was trying to win Betty, I'd— Oh, I say, why don't you get Betty to talk to Virginia? She'll win her for you—Betty can win anyone."

"You seem to forget that I have Betty to thank as the primary cause of all this mix-up. If she had not warned me, through you—you great, blundering innocent—to spare Miss Hasbrouck my attentions, everything would have been different from the beginning."

"Well, that's just it. If Betty made the mischief, it's up to her to remedy it. Leave it to her, I say, and it'll be all right." Bob spoke confidently, but it failed to convince Walmsley. He continued to pace the floor moodily, and his cousin watched him anxiously.

"You'd better come fishing with me, Burton. It'll do you good. Just to sit and rock out there in the sunshine, with a line in your hands to give you an excuse for doing nothing, and a little bottle of something on your hip. I tell you it's the most soothing thing in the world—beats all your rest cures. Come on, Burt, and I'll promise that you'll forget there's a woman in creation before you come back."

Walmsley laughed. He paused in his restless pacing to and fro, and placed his hands affectionately on his cousin's shoulders, but shook his head.

"No, thank you, Bob. I'm going to see this thing through, and if I don't win out, I'll take a trip out West and kill something."

XIII

IN WHICH BETTY PROMISES TO "SET THINGS STRAIGHT"

VIRGINIA had promised to join Betty on the beach at eleven o'clock. She was about to descend the stairs when she heard Burton Walmsley's voice in the room below. Drawing back hastily she returned to her own room, where she remained a prisoner for the next half-hour. From her window she could see Betty sitting alone at some little distance down the beach, and knew that she was becoming impatient by the restless glances she bestowed on every passer-by.

Virginia heard Bob descend the stairs and his voice mingled with Walmsley's in conversation. She waited with what patience she could command until she heard departing footsteps on the veranda and all was silent downstairs. They had gone out, probably fishing. She had heard Bob say something about it at the breakfast-table. Wondering what excuse she could make to Betty for her tardiness, she ran hurriedly down the stairs and into the living-room, where she had left her parasol.

A tall figure standing by the open window turned as she entered the room. "Mr. Walmsley!" she faltered. "I—didn't know you were here."

"I presume not. May I detain you for a few minutes?"

Virginia hesitated. "Betty is waiting for me. I'm very late."

"I won't keep you long, but I must speak to you. Won't you be seated?"

Virginia sat down reluctantly. The green parasol lay on the settle at the farther end of the room. If she could only seize it and flee!

"May I refer to our conversation of last evening?" Virginia bowed stiffly. "Forgive me for opening the subject again, but something has occurred which I thought might lead you to give me a kinder answer. When I asked you to be my wife you gave as your principal reason for refusing my proposal my friendship with Mrs. Clevenger. Would it make any difference if that—that—er—obstacle were removed?"

"I don't quite understand you," said Virginia rather icily.

"Mrs. Clevenger has gone away; has joined her husband on a trip to Europe."

"Ah!" Miss Hasbrouck's tone betrayed no surprise and but slight interest. She looked at Mr. Walmsley as if for further explanation. Then, as he seemed to be waiting for her to speak, a deeper color came into her cheeks and her eyes sparkled angrily.

"Am I to understand that because Mrs. Clevenger has left Pine Bluff you feel at liberty to transfer to me the attentions you have lavished upon her in the past, and that you expect me to accept them?"

"Miss Hasbrouck! You misunderstand me."

"I don't think I do. My mind is very clear on this subject. While Mrs. Clevenger was here you slighted me as no man ever slighted me before; ignored me as completely as if I had not existed. You walked with Mrs. Clevenger, motored with Mrs. Clevenger, swam with Mrs. Clevenger, and now that she has gone you expect me to slip into her place as your companion. Let me say that my answer is the same as it was last night—no, no, NO!"

With angry tears in her eyes, Virginia, forgetful of the green sunshade, darted toward the open window.

Walmsley followed. "Virginia!" he pleaded. "Listen! I can explain."

"I sha'n't listen. There is nothing to explain. Everything is perfectly clear. Never speak to me on this subject again."

Stepping over the window-sill, she rushed down the steps and disappeared,

but not in the direction of the beach. Walmsley turned back into the room.

"So that ends it," he muttered. Tearing Mrs. Clevenger's note into shreds, he threw the particles into the empty grate. "A fellow can't talk to a girl when she forbids it, but I swear I'll convince her in some way that I'm not the cad she thinks me. Perhaps if I go away— Time works wonders."

He threw himself into a chair and took up the paper again, but found that he could not even make a pretense of reading, so he flung it down and went to the window.

The day was glorious! It should not be spoiled for him simply because a girl chose to be obstinate. He could order his machine brought around and find solace in a race down the shore road, in the face of a breeze that fairly tasted of the sea.

Just then Betty came up the steps of the veranda, panting a little with the exertion. Betty was increasing in *embonpoint*. She laid her sunshade and work-bag on the table. "Have you seen anything of Virginia?" she asked.

"Yes, I've seen considerable of Virginia," replied Walmsley rather testily. He wanted to say "Virginia's temper," but restrained himself.

"I wonder why she didn't meet me," Mrs. Hargrave pondered in mild surprise. "She promised to join me on the beach at eleven o'clock. Where did she go?"

"I don't know. That way," waving an arm vaguely toward the window.

"It's strange I did not meet her." Mrs. Hargrave seated herself comfortably and, opening her work-bag, took out a piece of embroidery. "It was rather warm on the beach. Really, the house is the coolest place."

"Indeed! I fancied it was rather warm here." Walmsley paced the room moodily, and Betty watched him out of the corner of her eye.

"I'm awfully sorry about this thing, Burton," she said sympathetically. "I know it has upset you terribly."

"Then she has told you?"

"Yes, but she didn't tell me all; simply said she was going away."

"Going away!" exclaimed Walmsley in consternation. "Oh, Betty, you must not let her go!"

"But she's gone!"

"Gone! When? Who do you mean?"

"Why, Mrs. Clevenger, of course. Who did you think I meant?"

"Oh, Mrs. Clevenger—I!"

"I don't wonder that you are worried about this thing, but I always knew that woman would throw you over in a minute if she met anyone with more money. And, of course, when it's her own husband, no one can say a word."

"Her husband!" echoed Walmsley, thoroughly mystified.

"Why, yes. Haven't you heard? George Clevenger's uncle in England has died and left him sole heir. Sally sails with him tomorrow—to help him spend the money, I suppose."

Walmsley stared for a moment, then chuckled softly. "Her wifely duty! Oh, Sally—Sally Clevenger, they can't beat you."

"And don't you care?" asked Betty, looking at her cousin in amazement.

"Care?" Walmsley leaned over and took Betty's hands in his. "Why, Betty, what a brute I should be not to rejoice in Mrs. Clevenger's good fortune. It's the best thing that ever happened to Sally Clevenger—and Burton Walmsley."

"Well!" said Mrs. Hargrave resignedly, "I don't understand you at all. I always thought you were *horribly* in love with Sally Clevenger." Walmsley made a comical gesture of despair. "And now you act as if you were glad she is gone. You men are the queerest mortals."

"Betty dear," said Walmsley tenderly, "I always thought *you* understood me."

"Well, I thought so, too, but I give it up. Why," confidentially, "even Bobbie took to gamboling after that woman like a playful elephant. I am so glad she's gone," with a sigh of relief.

"So am I—I mean I'm glad for your sake, Betty. Bob was really making himself ridiculous."

"Burton!" Mrs. Hargrave's tone

was tragic, and Walmsley hastened to change the subject.

"I say, Betty—how would you like me for a cousin?"

"Why, silly, you *are* my cousin; at least you are Bob's cousin, and that's almost the same."

"It is not the same, Betty. It's such a one-sided affair as it is. I wish that the tie could be cemented more closely; that our relations were nearer, fonder, dearer——"

Mrs. Hargrave rose from her seat, an expression of horror on her usually placid countenance. "Burton Walmsley! Have you gone crazy? Or are you trying to make love to me behind my husband's back?"

"Heaven forbid!" cried Walmsley, aghast; then laughing. "Oh, Betty. Betty! You are the dearest little bunch of obtuseness in the world. There's only one woman in the world I want to make love to, and she will have none of it—she's your cousin, Betty, Virginia Hasbrouck."

"Virginia!" in amazement. "Have you been making love to her? When did you ever get the chance?"

"Not often, it is true. The fates have not been kind, and when they have been she has not. She won't listen to me."

"Why, she ought to be ashamed of herself!" indignantly. "What does she want, I'd like to know? A mere chit of a schoolgirl."

Walmsley stared incredulously. Betty his champion!

"Not me, I'm afraid," he answered.

"Well, I don't know where she'd find better. You're good-looking—although I shouldn't tell you so, and rich—although, of course, I wouldn't advise anyone to marry for money, still it's a good thing to have. And now that Mrs. Clevenger has gone——"

"Yes; she has gone, but it seems that Mrs. Clevenger in the past is as much an obstacle as Mrs. Clevenger present. When she was here Virginia accused me of trifling with her affections—with Mrs. Clevenger's affections! Did you catch that, Betty?—and now that she has gone pretends that I only want her,

Virginia, because Mrs. Clevenger has thrown me down."

"Well, I can hardly wonder at that. You certainly did slight Virginia dreadfully sometimes."

Walmsley gasped.

"Betty!" sternly, "*you* know why I slighted her."

Betty met his accusing glance calmly. "Oh, was Bob such an idiot as to tell you? That can soon be remedied, now that Mrs. Clevenger has gone, and you are really serious about Virginia."

"Will you straighten it out, Betty?"

Walmsley seized her hands and crushed them joyously. "I couldn't explain myself without appearing like a thundering ass, and she wouldn't listen to me, anyhow."

"Well, she'll listen to me. But you'd better go away and give me a chance to talk to her. She'd be embarrassed and hard to manage if she thought you were about."

"I'll go, Betty—at once, but I'll be back for dinner, and I hope you'll have good news for me. I leave my fate in your hands."

XIV

HOW SHE SET THEM STRAIGHT

"BETTY!"

It was Virginia's voice, a little choky, as if with tears, and she peeped rather timidly into the room where Betty sat sewing placidly. "Where's Mr. Walmsley?"

"He's gone motoring. Did you want him?"

"No, indeed!" decidedly. "It's because I *didn't* want him that I asked."

She came into the room and Betty saw that her eyes showed signs of recent tears. She slipped behind Mrs. Hargrave's chair, as if to avoid scrutiny, and talked over her shoulder.

"Betty, I—I think I shall have to go home."

"Go home, child! Why?"

"I'm very sorry, Cousin Betty—you have made everything so pleasant for me and I've been so happy here," with a

little catch in her breath that sounded suspiciously like a sob. "But I really must go away."

"Why, what is wrong?" asked Mrs. Hargrave gently.

Virginia placed her hands caressingly on her cousin's shoulders, but kept her face averted. "I don't know. I—I reckon I'm a bit homesick."

Mrs. Hargrave captured one of Virginia's hands and drew her gently down to the stool at her feet. The girl hid her telltale face in her cousin's lap, but Betty raised it and forced her to return her glance.

"No, my dear; you are not mother-sick one bit. You look as if you had something on your conscience; as if you had treated someone badly and wouldn't own up to it. What have you done to Burton Walmsley?"

"Nothing! Nothing! Has he dared to tell you?"

"No, no," soothingly. "He has told me nothing," said Betty-without-a-Conscience. "But I noticed that he seemed very sad and preoccupied today."

"That's because Mrs. Clevenger has treated him unkindly."

"Pooh! He doesn't care a copper about Mrs. Clevenger."

"Why, Betty! You told me he did. You said he was very much in love with her, and that you feared he intended to marry her."

"Did I?" easily. "Oh, well, that was several weeks ago, and before he knew you."

"But, Betty," in bewilderment, "you know how he slighted me——"

"Yes, dear; I know, but that was all my fault."

Puzzled and amazed, Virginia could only repeat stupidly, "Your fault?"

"Yes, dear. You see it was this way: I knew you were young and not used to the ways of the world, and I was afraid if Burton was kind and attentive to you—he's a fascinating sort of fellow, you know—that you might think seriously of it, while he meant nothing. So I got Bob to speak to him—in a delicate, casual way—and tell him not to be *too* agreeable to you, but I suppose poor,

dear Bob must have made a bungle of it, for Burton got quite stuffy about it——"

Slowly Virginia withdrew from her cousin's touch. She rose to her feet and stood back a pace or two, her head raised with girlish hauteur, her eyes flashing.

"You dared to tell him that! To let him think that I was so foolish and susceptible that no man might be kind to me lest I drop into his hands like an overripe plum! Oh, what must he think of me!"

"Why, Virginia! There's nothing to be angry about. I only did what I thought was right—what your mother would have done had she been here."

"My mother!" The girl's throat quivered with suppressed sobs. "My mother would have had more confidence in me. Did you think that a girl brought up as I have been—? Oh, I've known a few men, Betty, if I am only twenty! Did you think that I was so stupid as not to distinguish between the real and the counterfeit? That I would not know when a man was flirting and when he was sincere? That I would not have courage to say 'no' if there was the slightest doubt in my heart—?" She broke off with a little catch in her voice, but her head was still held proudly high.

Betty tried to speak. "Virginia, listen to me, child! You don't understand."

"I do understand, Cousin Betty—what has puzzled me for a long time. I know now why Mr. Walmsley has avoided and ignored me in the most direct and cutting manner; why he feared to be even kind to me. Oh, what must he think of me! How glad I am that I said 'no' to him."

"Then you have refused Burton?"

"Yes; I have refused him," angrily. "And I will refuse him again—a thousand times if he asks me. Do you think I could ever say 'yes' after this? But he will never have another opportunity—I'm going away—I'm going home."

"Don't be foolish, Virginia," said Betty irritably, her placid temper considerably ruffled. "Stay right here

and be kind to Burton Walmsley. Most girls would give their eyes for such a chance."

"I never want to see Mr. Walmsley again." Virginia's hands fluttered to her throat. "I could not face him, knowing what I know, and what he knows."

"Nonsense!"

"I'm going home, Betty."

"You can't travel alone, child, and I can't go with you. I expect the Smythes and Churchills here tomorrow."

"You forget that I have traveled alone between Richmond and Wellesley many times during the past four years."

"Your mother will wonder why you have left us so suddenly, and ask questions," protested Betty a little weakly.

"No blame shall fall on you, Betty; rest assured of that. I'm homesick. Mother will understand."

XV

THE SURRENDER OF VIRGINIA

It was five o'clock when Betty Hargrave, restlessly pacing the veranda, heard the "honk, honk!" of Walmsley's automobile as it swung in at the gate. She went to meet him as he alighted, and announced abruptly, "She's gone!"

"This is the second time today you've startled me with that cry," Walmsley was laughing, his face alight with expectation. "Who is it this time?"

"Virginia!"

"Virginia!" His face paled, and his lips straightened out. "What do you mean? Where has she gone?"

"She's gone home—to Richmond."

"And you let her go? Oh, Betty! You promised——"

"I know, but I couldn't help it. Honestly, Burton! I tried to straighten things out, but instead of being pleased, as I thought she would when she knew the rights of it, she went into a temper, declared she would never look at you again, and packed off for home and mother."

"What train is she going by?"

"The 5.11 for New York. She telephoned for a depot carriage, and I heard her call up the B. & O. and secure a berth on the seven something from Jersey City. Then she went up and packed her trunks."

Walmsley was stepping into the car. "Did she take trunks with her?"

"One of them; I'm to send the other after her. Where are you going?" Betty was forced to raise her voice to be heard above the snorting of the machine.

"To bring her back," called Walmsley over his shoulder, as the car plunged down the driveway.

A hasty glance at his watch showed him that he had just eight minutes to cover the road between the cottage and Pine Bluff Station before the train would leave which was to carry Virginia Hasbrouck away. Even though he bade defiance to speed laws, which he was fully prepared to do, this would leave him very little time for persuasion, and, as he thought grimly, he could not very well drag a young woman bodily from a train in broad daylight, or even prevent her from boarding it without creating a scandal.

But to catch it he was determined, and when he had done so he would make her listen to him, if he had to remain with her until the end of her journey.

Along the shore road, up hill and down; it was a merry race! The water blurred blue on one side, the meadows misty green on the other. At the four corners where the road was crossed by the boulevard leading to the city a policeman held up a warning finger but Walmsley never slackened his speed. With face set and grim, his eyes fixed on the distant hilltop, he dashed defiantly by, thankful for the dust that he knew had pretty well covered his numbers. He would pay the fine coming back—if they caught him; he had no time now.

He had gained the top of the hill and was plunging down its further side when he saw something that caused his heart to leap for joy. A

rather dilapidated vehicle, evidently in trouble, was drawn to the side of the road. The horse, almost devoid of harness, nibbled the grass a few paces away, while the driver, with a stone picked up from the roadway and used as a hammer, was trying to repair damages.

A trunk protruded from the box-seat; in the rear was a slender, erect figure, clad in gray, with a soft veil floating from a close traveling-hat.

"The fates are pleased to be kind," murmured Walmsley, and before the wreck had slowed down beside the wreck his line of action had been planned.

"Mr. Walmsley!" Virginia's cheeks glowed scarlet as the man she was running away from stepped from the panting machine.

"You seem to have met with an accident," he said genially, pretending not to see her embarrassment. "Can I be of any assistance?"

Reassured by his impersonal manner, Virginia regained her composure.

"Yes; the harness has broken. We were coming down the hill, hurrying, you know, to catch the train, when the carriage seemed to run over the horse, and the harness went all to pieces."

The driver looked up and grinned rather sheepishly.

"It was pretty old, but I thought it'd last a spell longer. What's worryin' me is this young lady here. I'm afraid she'll miss her train."

"Oh, I can't lose it. I *mustn't*! Won't you please hurry!" Miss Hasbrouck's tone was full of distress.

"If you'll permit me," Walmsley's manner was quiet and deferential, "I'll take you to the station in the car. What time does the train leave?"

"At 5.11."

"Then I'm afraid you have lost it. It is 5.10 now."

"Oh, dear! What shall I do?"

Tears came into Virginia's eyes, and she looked so sweetly distressed as she raised them to Walmsley's face that a colder and harder heart than his would have melted.

"There is only one way that I can see out of the difficulty, Miss Has-

brouck," he said gently. "If it is imperative for you to go into town to-night, permit me to drive you to your destination."

Virginia hesitated and opened her lips to speak. She reconsidered, and after pondering for a moment she, too, resorted to guile, and smiling graciously, she accepted the offer.

Walmsley assisted her to alight from the dilapidated vehicle, and having tipped the driver was about to take his place beside her in the car, when she cried, "Oh, my trunk! Don't leave that behind."

"Trunk? Is that yours?"

Virginia nodded.

"I'll attend to it, sir." The hackman scrambled up from his knees and dragging the trunk from the surrey, transferred it to the tonneau of the machine. "All right, sir," he said, and stepped back, as Walmsley opened the throttle and the car glided down the hill.

"You are evidently going on a visit," remarked Walmsley, as they sped along under the arching trees. "I hope you are not running away from Pine Bluff?"

Virginia flushed guiltily at his words, and avoided his eyes. "No—not running away," she stammered. "I—I'm just going home."

"Home! To Virginia?"

"Yes; to Virginia. I'm a little bit homesick, and I think, from mother's letters, she wants me as much as I want her. Do you think we can make the 7.10 from Jersey City, Mr. Walmsley?"

Walmsley's face was stern, his lips set firmly. No one, particularly Virginia, could have suspected from his grim aspect that his heart was pounding riotously at the daring play he was about to make. He did not dare to look at the girl beside him, could not trust himself to meet the startled look in her timid eyes, so he kept his own fixed, under low-drawn brows, on the stretch of white roadway that leaped out before them. The words shot out from between his compressed lips, sharp and accusing:

"You were running away from me."

"No-o," lifting surprised eyes to his stern face, "oh, no."

"Why?"

"But I wasn't."

"Pardon me, but I know that you were. Betty told me."

"Oh," shrinking to the further edge of the seat, "Betty is a traitor. And you—you pretended not to know."

"It suited my purpose. Now tell me why you ran away from me? Or shall I tell you? You were afraid of me; afraid if you stayed that I would make you listen to me; that you'd have to believe me. You knew that nothing would stand in my way; that sooner or later, with your consent, or without it, I would make you my wife. Am I right?"

Virginia stared in a sort of shrinking fascination at the cool, masterful creature beside her, and her voice was very faint as she faltered: "Ye-es."

"I knew it. You ran away from me, but a lucky chance has given you to me again. Now I'm going to run away with you."

"What do you mean?" Virginia demanded, in a tone that was intended to be indignant, but a little quaver of fear crept into it; the man beside her looked so capable of carrying out his threat. "What do you mean?" she repeated, frightened by his silence.

"I mean that you are not going to catch the 7.10 train; that you are not going back to Richmond, nor anywhere else until you are my wife."

"Mr. Walmsley! You are insane!"

"Perhaps. But if I am, you have made me so, and must stand the consequences. I am determined that you shall be my wife, with your consent or without it. We are not going to Jersey City tonight; we are going to Clinton Manor, where we will be married. There's a Methodist minister there who was a college mate of mine, and he will marry us without asking any questions."

"You won't dare do such a thing!"

"All's fair in love," he quoted doggedly. "It is because I believe you love me that I dare do this."

"I don't—I hate you!" She shut

her teeth hard, and her eyes were blazing, but her fury was lost on the man beside her. His only response was to push the speed lever forward and the car leaped out at a rate that turned Virginia giddy as trees, telegraph poles, houses and meadows sped madly by, and she clutched at the arms of the wide seat to keep from sliding about in it.

"Don't—don't you think—we would—get there in time—if we didn't go—quite so fast?" she gasped.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," stiffly, and the machineslackened its speed and settled down to a steady, whirring bubble. "I was not aware that you were uncomfortable."

He turned and looked at her for the first time since they started on their journey, and while his glance was kind, Virginia saw the mastery in it, and little thrills, half fear, half of pleasant excitement, chased the blood to her cheeks.

It was certainly exciting! An adventure such as in her maddest school-girl dreams she had never anticipated. She had always admired the pluck of "young Lochinvar," and surely a big white touring-car, of up-to-date model, was much better than any steed that ever came out of the west. In fact, it was rather delightful to be snatched up and whirled away in the broad light of day, like a beautiful, captive princess of olden time.

But that did not exonerate Burton Walmsley. She felt that she must resent his high and masterful air of assurance; he must be humbled, made to feel that he had presumed too far. Her spirits rose at the suggestion, and she drew herself up until her eyes were level with his, and spoke icily:

"You seem to forget, Mr. Walmsley, that we are not living in the Middle Ages. No woman can be married against her will in these modern times. If you persist in carrying out your mad intention of taking me to this Methodist parson, I shall tell him my story and refuse to marry you."

Watching closely to note the effect of her words Virginia saw no weaken-

ing of the determined face, no falter of the steady glance. He made no answer, but swung sharply to the left to avoid a farm wagon that came lumbering out of a field close by. It may have been imagination, or the effect of a passing shadow, but Virginia fancied that her companion's face looked whiter, and even more determined.

"I said I'd refuse to marry you," she repeated haughtily, but could not keep a little quaver of fear from her voice.

Still no answer, and the car rolled steadily on.

Then Miss Hasbrouck did what filled the masterful man at her side with consternation, and brought him to a proper state of contrition.

With a timid glance at his immobile countenance she turned from him, and with outflung elbow resting on the side of the car, she buried her face in the curve of her arm and began to cry softly.

Walmsley cast a glance of horror at the slender form huddled in the corner of the wide seat. His impulse was to gather the pretty, distressed child in his arms and soothe away her fears, but realized how helplessly a chauffeur is bound to his wheel.

A few hundred yards ahead, to the right of the highway, opened a shady lane. Into this Walmsley turned the car, bringing it to a halt in the shade of an oak-tree that spread its branches over a low stone wall. With arms released from duty he gathered Virginia's shaking form tenderly to him, half kneeling in the car to bring himself to her level. "Virginia! Forgive me! I'm a brute!"

She nodded, as if agreeing with his self-accusation.

"Don't cry, child," he said, drawing her hands gently from her face. Truth

to tell there were but few tears on her cheeks or clinging to her lashes. "Don't cry, or I'll shoot myself. Positively!" as a faint smile crossed her downcast face. "I don't feel fit to live. I'm humbled in the dust."

The smile was struggling to assert itself, and to conceal it Virginia buried her face in the broad gray shoulder so conveniently near. There was a moment's silence, while Walmsley held her close. Then, raising her head, but keeping her face averted, Virginia, with a return of dignity, attempted to push him from her. But he held her to him, pleading in her ear, which was close to his lips.

"Virginia! Rose of the South," he whispered tenderly, "say I'm forgiven. Say," growing bolder, "say you love me."

She did not answer, but slowly turned her head until her face was close to his. One long look of her eyes into his, and their lips met. She had forgiven and surrendered.

They still sat beneath the whispering oak when a colt, drawing an old-fashioned buggy, turned from the Post Road into the shadowy lane that seemed to lead straight to the golden sunset. The colt pricked up its ears and shied at the big white auto standing by the wayside. The farmer swore softly and looked back.

"We must go," said the girl shyly, her cheeks very pink and her eyes luminous.

"Yes," asserted the man reluctantly. "But where shall we go? Do you still wish to go home to Richmond or will you return to Pine Bluff? Don't you think you can forgive Betty now?"

"Poor Betty! She meant well. Yes; let us go back."



PRAYER

By Maarten Maartens

THE preacher's voice sank drowsily upon the drowsing heads below. In the little white-washed chapel, with its closed windows and closed doors and enclosed multitude of smells, the atmosphere was one of physical and mental suffocation. Outside the August sun shone bright, and green branches lay fresh against the dusty windows. The minister's chickens grubbed and clucked against the walls.

In the minister's pew, where all eyes could behold them and criticize, sat his children, beside their mother, in a row. There were seven of them: the smallest, Peterkin, aged three, tight against her, the others, in a yellow-headed ladder, leading up to the step-brother, the big boy, Jan Somers, aged eleven.

For the minister's wife had been a widow with one child when she had married him, a woman of some means and some culture, altogether above the status, social and mental, of the minister.

She had loved her first husband, Captain Somers, but she had deeply regretted, too late, his want of religion. She herself had been suddenly converted at an open-air meeting and she was sorrowfully vexed with her husband for not sharing her experiences. When he died by a fall from his horse in the plenitude of his health she was stricken down to the dust. Rotteval, the Methodist minister, administered much consolation, and in the course of doing so married her. With the curious inconsistency of herco-religionists she accepted her first husband's incontrovertible

damnation as an inevitable fact and tranquilly left him to the mercy of God, while proclaiming, as a tenet of her creed, that God's mercies were confined to the living.

Within five years she bore Rotteval six children, and the means which had amply sufficed for herself and her little Jan appeared inadequate to keep filled with any comfort half-a-dozen gaping mouths and a Methodist chapel. The new husband proved exacting. His standard was himself.

The boy Jan, occasionally drawn forth to his father's people from the increasing discomfort of his own home, returned thither, disconcerted, out of joint. His grandfather, his uncles, all heartily abused the hypocrite Rotteval, while conscientiously hushing each other with nods in the direction of the child. Before Jan Somers was ten he had grasped the situation as it presented itself to his dead father's relatives; he placed the Somerses much higher and the Rottevals much lower than was consistent with an unknown reality, and himself with his mother hung wretchedly between.

Instead of reproaching his mother he clung to her, as so-placed children will, with all his heart and soul. And he loved all his little stepbrothers and sisters devotedly, reserving his indignant contempt for the man who had given him them.

"The unending damnation of the damned," droned the minister, without a tinge of feeling in his voice. Jan knew the familiar rise and fall of the words which left his heart untouched. At grandfather's they told you that

death was death; there was nothing beyond. You dropped like a fly, or went out like a lucifer match. You knew nothing of these things. Death was profoundly uninteresting. He followed with impatient eyes a buzzing bluebottle against the whitewash, longing to catch it and hold it tickling in his fist and let it go.

The minister's was a Dutch sermon: he droned for nearly an hour and a half. There are no clocks in such chapels, for a very good reason, but no clock could have induced him to be shorter.

Half-way he said "Damned" with an extra emphasis of pause and contemplation. His eyes wandered round the little assembly; everybody woke up, and two collections took place, to the tinkle of little bells at the end of black bags, while a psalm tune meandered through the building at the rate of three words to ten seconds. Jan had measured the pace one day, by the aid of the silver watch his grandfather had given him, and been whipped on the Monday morning for looking at the time during church. Yet what did he care about the time? He knew they were halfway when he had put his two cents into the double collection: and the hour would elapse before he could escape into the open. Nor indeed was there any real escape, on the Sunday, from the two services and Sunday-school and the talk in between.

It is not true, as some people have stated, that Rotteval intentionally ill-treated his stepson. Still less can it be maintained that the man was a hypocrite. His religion was, of its kind, sincere. It was of his own making and he proportionately believed in it. Its principal conviction, unconsciously suffusing every action or conclusion, was that human nature had by sin become so hopelessly corrupt that Simon Rotteval, being human, was infallible. Moreover every man, woman or child was hopelessly damned, unless elect, and must therefore be saved. Personally, he, Simon Rotteval, was elect, and his wife, and his half-dozen children. The future state of the naughty, hardening stepson

could not be so certain. It followed that, while all young hearts should be whipped into goodness, the stepson, in his own interest, being oftenest naughty, must, for love of the child himself, be most frequently, regretfully chastised.

Therefore there was much correction in the house of Rotteval, and the mother, when her fond instincts objected, was always effectually silenced by texts from the Book of Proverbs. She surrendered unconditionally to the Book of Proverbs. She could stand up against Rotteval when his ideas clashed too much with her gentler upbringing, but not against Rotteval backed by Holy Writ.

So little Jan was solemnly spanked, caned and flogged, with the progress of his ages, into goodness not only, but into active piety. Never slapped or cuffed, for that, in the executant, might be dictated by, or at any rate ascribed to, temper, while a solemn ceremonial, preferably postponed till the day after, with much deploring of evil and depreciation of boy nature, and glorification of the Rod, could never be otherwise explained than by that passionate love of amelioration which enables a heavy-hearted (and handed) preceptor to endure the sufferings he bestows upon another. "I could not feel it more were he one of my own," said the stepfather to the mother. She believed him.

To say that Jan's heart was thus forcibly inclined not only to obedience, but to active piety is no exaggeration. For Rotteval was of those who believe that the terrors of religion alone appeal to the natural man. He beat the Bible into his children, filling them with minatory and condemnatory passages which he painfully underlined.

On the Sunday morning in August, to the drowsy congregation, his discourse was of prayer. He repeated the usual commonplaces about that greatest of living mysteries, the meeting of the human will with the divine, and, being compelled to preach for an hour and a half, he repeated them over and over again. Jan was not listening. He was not an imaginative boy, healthy,

happy-go-lucky, full of play, but he had felt long ago, in his round little heart, that his stepfather was mistaken on the whole about God, and that in no case would it be possible for him, Jan Somers, to love both.

"I am sure God is a gentleman," the little boy had once said to one of his uncles, "and 'papa' is not."

The uncle had laughed, a foolish habit in intercourse with children. "There isn't any God," he had answered, "but, of course, if there were you would be right."

Jan Somers did not believe his uncle—any more than he believed Mr. Rotteval. For, doubting of his own clear-spoken conscience, he had applied to his mother, and she, drawing him to her bosom, had murmured eagerly of our Father which is in Heaven. "Don't tell papa," she had said as she loosened her hold, "for he wouldn't understand." The tears which had gathered in Jan's eyes dried to salt.

"Ask whatsoever you will," said the preacher for the twentieth time, "and if your will be in unison with the Lord's He will grant your request." Little Jan had heard only the text, and the text, ringing like a refrain throughout the sermon—he would have to say it, without a hitch, before dinner—had easily got itself stuck in his head:

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

He was not yet twelve. After his twelfth birthday he would have to repeat as much as he could remember of the sermon. He used to think sometimes with vague terror of the Sundays when he would be more than twelve. Meanwhile, on this particular Sabbath morning he comforted himself with the very utterances of Scripture, not heeding a syllable of his stepfather's jargon all around them. The promise opened up to him a source of power, hitherto unsuspected, of boundless possibilities. A little boy was omnipotent. Whatever he asked the Almighty to do the Almighty was bound, by His own pledge, to perform it.

"If I ask God to make me win Everard Overveld's blood-alley, He must do it," he thought. For, like all children nurtured upon dogma, he was ever ready to be misled by a new aspect of a text. He nodded stealthily to little Peterkin, at the other end, close to mother. "If I get the blood-alley, I'll ask Him to make Peterkin strong," he reflected. For Peterkin was a delicate creature. But Peterkin tried hard to stare straight ahead. Jan, whom all the stepchildren adored, was constantly getting scolded for misbehavior in church.

At last the long service was over; the children walked home. Jan had been looking forward to the fresh air and the sunshine. Once out in them, he felt disappointed. The air was still stifling; the light made him giddy in a way it had never done before. The fields swam before his eyes, and a hot something pricked and throbbed in his throat.

When all were already gathered around the table the father came hurrying in. He was a tall, fat man with the regulation rusty clothes and oily skin and solemn manner. He cast a comprehensive glance over the dinner, in the act of sitting down, with a sigh. Then his eyelids sank slowly and his important voice orated a grace.

"I was detained," he began, with his spoon in the soup, "by the Widow Koppers, who was again sorely troubled about her soul."

"I wish she wouldn't be troubled at meal-times," objected Mevrouw Rotteval.

The minister reproachfully shook his head. "It was the sermon," he said. "The blessed result of my unworthy discourse—" He suddenly checked himself, spoon in midair. "By-the-by, Jan, you have not yet repeated your text!"

Jan, who was swallowing slow mouthfuls with a difficulty he had never experienced before, cleared his throat, and prepared himself for utterance. To his horror he realized that the carefully noted verse would not come at command. It was gone from him al-

together. There was only a singing in his head.

All the children waited. A drop of soup fell, with a splash, from the stepfather's spoon.

"I—I don't remember," said Jan. "It was about prayer."

The minister carefully deposited the spoon in his plate. "Don't remember!" he echoed.

"Oh, Jan, you must remember," pleaded the mother; "it was such a little text."

"It was prayer—about prayer—" stammered Jan.

"Ask whatsoever—" prompted his mother, but the minister intervened with unctuous hand.

"My dear," he declaimed, "you must pardon me. The boy has nearly attained to those years of discretion which, amongst the Chosen People, were considered to admit of initiation into the mysteries of the Law, yet he can sit under the ministration of his father for two blessed hours and not condescend to pick up a single crumb from the Table!" Then he turned to his stepson. "Go upstairs to your bedroom," he said. "If you thus despise spiritual food, it is not meet that you should enjoy carnal! Go upstairs to your room, Jan, and copy out the text you have forgotten, or rather not learned, twenty times. . . . Matthew twenty-one, twenty-two!" he called after the small retreating figure.

"It is very wrong of him," said the mother, in answer to her husband's half-questioning, half-reproachful glance. "I cannot understand why the dear child shows such frequent indifference to religion. I sometimes fear it is my fault, Simon, because, you see, he was born of parents who did not know the Lord."

"He certainly had not the inestimable advantage of these babes," assented Simon. "His father was a man of sin. Ours is a great responsibility, Matilda; we must never ignore it—lest the child grow up like his father!"

Matilda sighed, a very mingled sigh, full of sinful, sweet memories and

present-day solemnities, a sigh of contentment withal.

Meanwhile the boy, settling to his task, gave a similar little sob, but his sounded like one of relief. He seemed glad to have got away from the noise and the sunlight downstairs. The bedroom was comparatively cool. For the first time in his life he felt ill, and he did not understand the feeling.

"Believing ye shall receive," he wrote, his inked fingers clinging tight around the pen. His head drooped down low upon his hand. "Ask whatsoever ye will——"

He looked up, to the blue sky beyond the window, the Northern Summer sky, placid and benign. The words were slowly eating themselves into his heart. The morning's thoughts in chapel came back to him. And he nodded to high heaven with full understanding of his strength. Then again he dropped his face toward the paper. "And all things whatsoever—" It seemed to him as if, suddenly, he held Aladdin's Lamp.

His castles in the air were upset by the entrance of his stepfather. Simon Rotteval took up the partially filled sheet and carefully examined it.

"You have written very untidily," he said, "but I will excuse you the rest, because it is the Sabbath, and, besides, we must soon get ready for Sunday-school. Say your text, Jan."

The boy said it, fluently enough this time.

"And now, Jan, we will kneel down together, and, using this great privilege accorded us, will pray that you may grow up a God-fearing man, not an unbeliever, like your relations."

In a flash the boy felt that the final word, intentionally vague, was aimed straight at his dead father.

"I won't," he said.

The minister swelled out in all his long rotundity, egg-shaped.

"Child!" he exclaimed.

Little Jan faced him, dizzy and determined.

"Kneel down here!" cried the minister, projecting a shiny forefinger, "and pray at once to be good."

The boy did not stir.

Simon Rotteval stood waiting for a long, solemn moment: then he proceeded majestically toward the door which communicated with his own chamber, and Jan's heart sank into his boots. But it came up again with a thump against his teeth and set them hard.

The minister returned with a well-known cane. He paused by the door.

"In consideration of its being the Sabbath day I will give you another chance," he said.

But Jan, with the thought of his dead father coming uppermost, remained silent, so he was first exhorted, then stripped and severely beaten, to the glory of God.

The children downstairs listened awestruck, looking at their mother. "Jan is naughty," said the mother. She felt very sad about her little son.

"You will remain here," cried the incensed pastor, as he flung the boy from him, "until you consent to ask forgiveness of your Creator! You are not fit to partake of our Sunday-school devotions! To think that any child of mine should deliberately refuse to pray!" Then he hurried out of the room, as if not trusting himself to remain, and locked the door behind him.

The boy lay for a long time as he had fallen, shaken by sobs. When at last he arose, grown calmer, there was that look on his face of set hatred which only ill-treatment can call up. He went to the window and stood gazing out. The Summer afternoon was very still.

Suddenly he said aloud: "If I ever pray again, it will be that papa may die!" And presently he added: "I swear it."

Then again he was silent, thinking long, thinking what it would mean to him, to his mother, to all of them, this deliverance from the torment of oppression, as it appeared to him, the free return to grandpa, the uncles, the easy-going, educated Somers family. His mother's feelings, entirely molded by her religious sympathy with her husband, he could not, for lack of such sympathy, understand. According to

his father's people she had made a monstrous mistake. And he loved her in spite of it, longing for her release from the degradation it had brought upon her.

The slow hours dragged on, as he stood or lay, thinking in a circle of angry triumphant thought. Whether he stood by the window or hung across the bed, the white paper on the table seemed to call to him. "All things whatsoever—all things—" And he felt that he held his stepfather's life in the hollow of his little hand.

His head rolled on the pillow; the words went whirling round and round. As the shadows began to lengthen, the dull stabbing and swelling in his throat which had troubled him all day increased rapidly till he could hardly endure them. He sat up and gasped; the room seemed to heave toward him.

The door opened softly, and his mother came in.

"Jan, I hope you are no longer naughty," she said.

He did not answer, as much because of the physical effort it would have cost him as for want of a right word to say.

"You grieve your papa very much," his mother continued, and came and stood by the bed.

As she did so, he turned his hot face toward her, and she started. "Are you ill?" she said.

"I—I don't know," he gasped, and at the sound of his voice she swayed back.

"Does your throat hurt?"

"Yes."

"Come to the window. Let me look at it!"

He staggered off the bed. "It—it isn't very sore," he said.

"Are you sore anywhere else?" she asked, laying down, with trembling hand, the spoon she had pressed upon his tongue.

He looked at her, and she crimsoned. "I mean, do you feel pains in your limbs?"

"Yes, in my legs, mother. I did all the morning."

"Oh, Jan, why didn't you tell me?"

A few hours may make all the difference."

"What would it have mattered? I should have had to go to church all the same." He tumbled back to his bed. "Get into it at once," she urged, and fled from his unconscious reproach. She knew, without the hastily summoned doctor's telling, that the child had caught diphtheria.

All the others must be hurried out of the house, divided among willing members of the little congregation. A placard, according to the foolish law of the country, must be affixed to the front door, warning all men not to enter, although the inmates continued at liberty to go wherever they listed. Ninety-nine exasperating medical measures had to be taken against infection, all utterly fallacious because of the impracticability of a hundredth. In the silence and bustle of nursing, the constantly renewed requirements of dangerous illness, the mother and the stepfather wore themselves out. The house was hushed around the struggle, yet alive with the terror of an impending catastrophe. After a day or two an operation became necessary. The doctor shook his head.

When he came back in the evening he shook it again. He was with the parents in the room adjoining the sick-room.

"If the boy is in danger, he must know it," said Rotteval. The mother looked across at the rugged old doctor, all her agony of hope in her face.

"Of course he is in danger," replied the doctor. "If you tell him, you will probably kill him at once."

"I am responsible," said Simon, "for my stepson's soul."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "And for his body, I presume," said the doctor, walking out.

"Don't, Simon!" said the wife softly. "Let me." They were both pale with anxiety and night-watching. The fat man's clothes flapped about him. "The child's soul—" persisted Simon.

"I will be its keeper. Simon, I have never wanted my own way: I have

let you act for the best with the boy——"

"Do not reproach me with that now!" cried the stepfather. "If you had desired differently——"

"Did not I say it was for the best? I reproach no one, not even myself. We have done our duty by the child according to our lights. God knows the rest. Grant me now this one thing: let me——" Her voice faltered. She faced him. "Do you think it is an enviable thing to tell a child he is going to die?"

"Come, come, it is not as bad as that!" objected Simon, advancing to place a limp hand upon her shoulder; but she shook him off and burst into an agony of tears.

"It will be tomorrow," she sobbed.

And, indeed, she had too well understood the doctor's reticence. Through the night she watched the unequal battle; in the early gray morning she said to herself: "It is nearly over."

She knelt by the bedside. Perfect silence lay all about her, in the house, and around it. Her husband was asleep in the adjoining room. Not a leaf stirred, not a living creature outside. Only the short, quick gasps of the boy kept on, and on, and on, stabbing her to the heart, every one. It was three o'clock, the majestic dawn of a cloudless Summer day.

"Jan!" she whispered, close to the dying child's ear, "you are very ill, dear. You must pray to God; you must pray."

He faintly shook his head. To her unspeakable horror, in distinct refusal, he shook his head. It was to her, in the honesty of her religious fervor, as if all the grief and anxiety she had undergone were as nothing compared to this moment of agony. She clasped her hands till the nails entered the flesh without her observing it. Was it possible that the misunderstanding between the child and his stepfather had brought her boy's heart to this?

In a tumult of intercession she bent over him, regardless of the danger, and, amid the cries of her soul to God,

"Jan!" she said, "Jan! You are ill. God only knows how ill you are.

You must pray to Him! You must pray!"

The boy forced himself to a supreme effort. "I *mayn't*," he hissed.

For that had been, throughout all the fever and the torment, amid the hideous confusions of his fancy, that had been the continuous oppression, worse even at times than the iron tightening at his throat. "O God, I *mayn't*. You know I *mayn't*!" He had repeated it over and over again, in restless tossings and whisperings, during the long day, the longer night. He was bound by his childish oath to pray first for his stepfather's death before he could put up any other petition.

"Whatsoever ye shall ask"! It seemed written in the air all around him: the flowers on the wall-paper wreathed the words in unending chains. He could ask his life of God; the pain would stop; he would get up and run about again. But his mother would be a widow, his little stepbrothers orphans.

"O God, have mercy upon me. You see I *mayn't*. I can't, God; You know I *mayn't*. Oh, help me, though I *mayn't* pray. My throat hurts so!"

Of the Deity of his stepfather's preaching he understood little, yet he knew Him to be terrible, righteous, an avenger. He knew every word of the Bible to be literally true: it must be accepted exactly as it stood.

"I *mayn't*," he gasped, turning to his mother his desperate, appealing eyes.

She lost all control of herself, sinking down by the bed. "You may!" she shrieked. "You may! You may! It's a lie of the devil's. O God, pity

him! Pity me! Tell him it's a lie! Have mercy on him. Help him to pray!"

But he knew that she couldn't understand. He was unable to explain to her. He could only lie gasping away his life.

"Oh, pray to Him!" she sobbed, "pray! pray! Shake your head, dear, to show you understand!"

He lay staring at her, not moving, anxious to spare her the pain of a refusal, pretending not to hear.

Then, suddenly, there came to him a great understanding that he was doing right, and that God, far beyond all men, knows right from wrong. God, as he had once cried out, in the clumsy muddle of the religious contortions around him, was a gentleman, and he met Him, in his death-agony, as a gentleman should. "I have done right," he said, deep down in his young soul. "Have mercy on me, God!"—and in the swift calm of that over-spreading consciousness he died.

Simon Rotteval, stealing in many minutes later, found the mother, lost in prayer, by the bed.

"You must not pray for him any longer now," he said; "that would be wrong."

She opened her eyes and gazed at her husband.

"I know," she answered; "I am praying for myself. And for you."

"You consider me to blame?"

"No, Simon; of course our religion is right. But I can only say, God, have mercy! God have mercy!"

"The Lord knoweth His own," said Simon Rotteval.



GOOD ADVICE

DELLA—I have eaten an onion.

STELLA—Don't breathe it to a living soul!

THE INGRATITUDE OF ERNEST

By Melville Chater

PERHAPS the title is unjust. Most of the fault lay with Ernest's mother, a wealthy, doting widow, who, when Ernest formed an undesirable attachment at the first opportunity of his twenty-two coddled years of city life, manoeuvred a quarrel between the pair and hurried her son away from cosmopolitan glamour into the quiet of New Jersey suburbs where green fields and blue skies soothe the fretted nerves and repair the wasted tissues of jaded New Yorkers. Or that is what it says in the real-estate advertisements.

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Weevil, issuing triumphantly from Mrs. McAde's double front room on Starling street, "your law-books are all unpacked, there's extra covering on the foot of your bed and the cozy-corner looks just beautiful. Study away, dear, and forget all about that horrid Duran girl; write me twice a week (there are stamped, addressed envelopes on the bureau) and promise your mother that her boy won't catch cold or get drowned in the river and that he'll never, never bother his head over women again."

And Ernest promised.

He proved to be a model son. Save for an occasional call on the William Piquins, who knew his people, he did nothing worse than to read law for six hours a day, retiring nightly upon the pious stroke of ten; and he wrote his mother long descriptions of Starlingways's scenery from the nerve-soothing, tissue-repairing viewpoint, as advertised. She had especially recommended him to the natural beauties of the place. But in Starlingways there are

two kinds of natural beauties, and presently Ernest discovered the second kind, and the second kind discovered Ernest. He was a shy, poetically framed youth with dark, melancholy eyes which looked, the girls said, as if he had suffered—a quality wherein woman finds some fatal fascination.

Dragged reluctantly to a Country Club dance, on the Piquins' invitation, Ernest ran the feminine gantlet of "Who's he and where is he staying?" And before he remembered that he was in mourning for a crushed love-affair, his card was almost full. Then someone presented him in quick succession to Miss Alton and Miss Macaulay, and he conceived a sudden, irresistible impulse to dance with both of them. Retiring to a corner, he gazed back and forth from the pink-and-white perfection, which was Miss Alton, to the dark distraction, which was Miss Macaulay, until his head swam. With two such creatures in the room and but one dance left on his card, he found himself unable to choose either girl because of the other's surpassing loveliness. When he finally divorced his thoughts from Miss Alton, Miss Macaulay had just given away the tenth, whereupon he fled to the former, only to encounter her reply, "I'm sorry, the tenth's taken." And when the tenth came Ernest was pressed into the service of an angular, rigidly smiling patroness, who declared that people waltzed so differently nowadays!

During the next week Ernest did not read much law; he was too busily occupied in making up his mind—a mind that wouldn't stay made. His mental film had been subjected to a double

exposure, which, as photographers know, results in a confusion of two images. Ernest called on Miss Macaulay, Ernest called on Miss Alton; simultaneously he developed an impartial fondness for each, but to no purpose. He was quite in the dark—a necessary condition of the developing process.

Ernest's position was that of a needle half-way between two magnets of equal strength. Miss Macaulay and Miss Alton were absolute antitheses and perfectly balanced each other. Pauline, the former, was tall, dark and reposeful; Elsie, the latter, was small and sunshiny. Pauline was serious-minded; she read meanings in life and ate caramels with an air of dreamy abstraction. Elsie frisked like a young lamb; she wore veils and bangles and produced a pleasant, fluttery, jingling effect. Each had always avoided each from a presentiment of mutual antipathy which was explicable by the antagonism of opposites and the plain fact that they had never known one another.

Public opinion, also, was in the dark. It knew that Ernest called upon Miss Macaulay on Mondays and Thursdays and upon Miss Alton on Wednesdays and Fridays; that he bought the former Emerson and Maeterlinck and the latter candy and soda-water; that with the one he strolled among the cliffs' majestic solitudes and that he took the other to matinées of "The Flyaway Girl" and kindred musical shows. Even the church-going test, usually deemed infallible, had no significance in this case; for while Ernest imbibed Presbyterianism and Pauline every Sunday morning, the evening of the same day always found him a convert to Episcopalianism and Elsie.

In fact, he had simply drifted from the state of twin-attraction into an impartial, double-barreled courtship. He was impartial perforce. Pauline's earnestness made him all the more easy prey to Elsie's frothiness, while Elsie's bird-like flutter set him dreaming afresh of Pauline's sweet repose; Pauline inspired him as the partner of some high life-work, while Elsie was just the

little person with whom to share what she called "a simply gorgeous time." Really, Ernest grew quite morbid about it. When most enjoying the society of either girl he found himself haunted by a fond, sneaking vision of just how the other one would have looked or said the selfsame things; he even tried to inoculate Pauline with comic opera and Elsie with Emerson, but the experiment gave him a severe shock of disillusion. His trouble was accurately diagnosed by someone who had taught both girls at the Ayrton and Darrow school. "Poor boy!" commented this lady, "he's trying to discover the North and South Poles simultaneously."

Ernest might have drifted in shallows till doomsday had not Mr. Alton sent his wife off to Pasadena for her health, with Elsie as traveling-companion.

"Papa says I must go," she told Ernest, with her quaint, martyred smile, "because I'm the cheery one of the family. How I do hate being cheery."

This was on the station platform, the day of her departure. Ernest stammered some involved remark about sunshine, the Pacific Coast and his own bleak existence. "And in case," he continued solemnly, "that I should never see you again—" Then the train dashed up, Mr. Alton interposed and all was left unsaid.

And Ernest rended his garments—but Miss Macaulay soon repaired the rents. Elsie once gone, Ernest's magnetic balance was upset; quite simply, naturally he gravitated upon Pauline. Musical comedy no longer knew him; he became a devout Presbyterian. There ensued long walks and talks among the cliffs, serious colloquies which quite confirmed Ernest's suspicions that he was destined for some great and useful career. By degrees the walks grew shorter and the talks longer. In Starlingways when two Sunday-walkers sit on the rocks all afternoon, counting progress by hours, not miles, we conclude that something has happened.

Commonplace men work up to pro-

posal pitch like a simmering kettle and boil over at the appointed time; Ernest's declarations always came with stunning unexpectedness as of some long-suppressed but irresistible passion. The pair had sat watching the massive river, far beneath them, for perhaps half an hour of silent reverie when of a sudden Ernest seized Pauline's hands and vowed that then, immediately, she should, must care for him, for him only and forever. Pauline shrank back, startled; she faltered tender incredulity—woman's barbed-wire fence of temporization. The barbs pierced Ernest; he cried:

"Not mean it? Look in my face! Every man has imagined that he was in love; I did, once. But then it did not spring, as it does now, from my whole, sincere self. I've always felt the duality of the soul, now I'm sure of it; for I never imagined the better, higher half of my nature until I knew you, Pauline!"

Literally Pauline refused him, virtually she accepted him as a satellite. It is hard to lose one's best friend, especially when he happens to be the best friend of one's best enemy. She gently told him that he must not refer to the subject again. The truth is, Pauline wanted Ernest to win her, but not all at once.

It is said that a man under the "silent system" either speaks or goes mad, and presumably Ernest took the former course. His progress under that system would make slow reading; but six weeks later when Mrs. Alton, whose homesickness had improved her health, wired her husband, "Returning at once—have written," events began to advance on the double-quick.

"Pygmalion and Galatea" was given up at Castalian Court, one night, and thither, as a matter of course, went Ernest with Pauline. The Court is a boys' school disguised as a Grecian myth; its white columns crown the second hill from whence it surveys the town from classic depths of grove, and its front elevation is a cross between a Doric temple and a Wall street trust company. The guests gathered in the

atrium, a long, dim courtyard bounded on three sides by galleried rooms rising tier on tier up to the high glass roof. For a while couples strolled about the pavement which girdled an interior garden of ferns, palms and shrubbery; they traced the course of the artificial brooklet or lingered on the rustic bridge, wondering if the resident pupils ever studied.

"Like it?" enthused Ernest. "Why, it's wonderful! So poetic, so suggestive! What a relief from the cold, hard commonplace! Ah, Pauline, I'd like to build such a house, some day, if only——"

He stopped short, stared blankly at a distant group of new-comers and forgot to complete his subjunctive. Just then a knot of youths broke in on Pauline with cross-introductions and overtures touching an informal dance which was to follow the play.

"Excuse me for a moment," whispered Ernest, "there's someone over there, someone I want to see—that is, someone I haven't seen. I—I mean, I'll be back soon." With which incoherent apology he vanished.

It was a someone whom he had imagined to be thousands of miles away—Elsie herself, more fluttery and fascinating than ever. They met in a jubilant mood. With her quick little gestures and bright eyes, slanted sidewise, she babbled along of simply gorgeous flower-fêtes, really terrific sunburns and the darlinest, cutest Chinese babies; while Ernest said, "Yes?" "No?" or "Did you?" Her effect was as of one singing a pretty little song about the attractiveness of the trivial. Ernest missed half the words, but he drank in all the music. Occasionally she said, "But I'm keeping you!" and then he vowed a stout negative. He was one of those men who, divining their attractiveness to women, are cursed with a fatal wish to make each one believe herself paramount. Over his shoulder he saw Pauline strolling about with one Dunlap, a recent conquest. In another moment the play would begin and then, Ernest promised himself, he would rejoin her.

But his moment lengthened unperceived until Elsie exclaimed, "Good gracious!" and he turned to find the Court bare, silent save for the fountain's solitary plash. They jumped up and hurried across to the model theatre. "Just in time," whispered Elsie, meaning that the curtain had not risen; but for Ernest, who beheld Pauline seated with Dunlap in the front row, it was just too late.

The comedy was said to be good; Ernest saw only the comedy that Pauline carried on with her neighbor for his, Ernest's, benefit. Dunlap was quite ten years his senior, which made it hurt all the more. At last the curtain fell, the audience dispersed and Ernest raged about by himself, awaiting the openings which Pauline ingeniously thwarted. By the time they met alone he was fuming like nitric acid, while she looked as placid and harmless as glycerine. The encounter of two such elements would make unpleasant reading; the bare headline, "Disastrous Explosion," must suffice.

It ended in Pauline's remarking that she felt rather sleepy and that Mr. Dunlap had offered to take her home. She urged Ernest to stay and enjoy the dance—that was her parting shot.

When after faithful, fruitless courtship there comes the break, it is the natural desire of man to throw himself away. Ernest, pacing the deserted courtyard, jeered at himself for a fool who had dreamed a foolish dream of high life and love; then he laughed youth's bitter laugh and flung himself into the ball-room's whirlpool of glittering vanities. But he was not even allowed to drown. It was Elsie who fished him out and applied first aids for the injured; she sat him in a palm-shadowed corner of the courtyard and looked up at him with her little, perplexed smile. Was he sure, she reiterated, that nothing was the matter?

Ernest murmured something vague about sorrow and loss. She faltered a timid question or two, then lapsed into silent sympathy. Elsie's sympathy was particularly dangerous; she did it with the wide, worried eyes of a novice

to suffering who shrinks from, yet shares, the strange pangs read in another's face.

Above the glass roof a full moon sailed high heaven, washing the courtyard with silver magic; the gay din of dance music and laughter swelled distantly—echoes from a callous, heartless world. Still the pair sat and talked, touching every subject save one which had risen unbidden between them, intangible yet real, like the moonlight.

In short, Ernest's magnetic balance had been reversed; Pauline was now eliminated and Elsie had become in turn his centre of gravity. But this, of course, he did not comprehend; his own explanation would have required no less than sonnets. The bare fact is that he suddenly grasped Elsie's hands and vowed that it was she, she alone, who could make his miserable, wasted life worth living.

"Why didn't I tell you this long ago?" he cried. "Because I would offer you nothing less than my whole, sincere self. Most men simply imagine they're in love; once I imagined it. Do you know what it is to be two different selves and to wonder which is the true one? It's a sort of horrible soul-duality. Elsie, you have taught me to know my true, right self and I can never do without you again."

Elsie had never been wooed in this wild strain, but all roads lead to love; and Ernest went home, that night, a secretly affianced man. But at early dawn life is stripped of moonshine, magic and impulsiveness, and the next morning he woke to cold, gray daylight and the knowledge of a hideous mistake. Now that he had cut himself off from Pauline he discovered that he loved her, needed her more than ever. He tossed and groaned, cursing himself for a weak, impressionable fool. No less heavily did there lie upon him the knowledge that he had wronged Elsie. Part of Ernest's trouble was, he was terribly conscientious. Instead of picking a quarrel with Elsie or continuing to give her the devotion of a staled heart, he determined to tell her all.

Under the strain of this delicate mis-

sion he took counsel with young Mrs. William Piquin. "Mrs. Billy" was magnificently practical. Given free hand, she could have managed not only her horses, dogs, baby and husband, but all of Traprock County. "What executive ability!" said her peers at the Woman's Club. "What a bully good fellow!" said the men who frequented her bridge-parties. She had been Ernest's confidante during his first lovelorn weeks at Starlingways, and had nursed his broken heart through the knitting process. Mrs. Billy was petite and pert; her nose was Irish, her heels were French and her manners cosmopolitan. She accepted homage from the younger men's set with a careless ease, born of the most scrupulous discretion, which made other women itch for pretexts to say things about her. Her husband, by the way, was the most harmless, affable man that ever sat and smoked and read Browning.

Ernest stood on the Piquins' veranda moodily reviewing his case when Mrs. Billy tripped downstairs with a yelping spaniel under one arm and a roll of bandages under the other.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Weevil," she said. "Glad you called. Hold these things and I'll shake hands. You see, Flip *will* chase automobiles. What do you know about setting bones?"

With his help she made a most businesslike job of Flip's hind-leg fracture, while from upper regions rang the baby's voice wailing for its mother and refusing to accept inferior substitutes. The operation over, Flip comforted with pillows and the baby quelled at long distance, Mrs. Billy gave her guest the hammock and inquired about his studies. Ernest stammered that he hadn't read much law lately; that he—in short, he needed advice. Mrs. Billy divined that it was not legal advice; she anesthetized him with some sympathetic generalities and deftly extracted the facts.

Facts, it is said, cannot lie; nevertheless they may be made to exaggerate. Ernest rhapsodized on Pauline, ideal love and brightest hopes—for what persevering suitor does not believe

himself to be just one step from success?—until Mrs. Billy deduced an all but consummated engagement with Elsie as a disturbing factor. She guessed that the girls' mutual dislike had deepened into rivalry; moreover, she was aware that innocent, heart-free Elsie had many scalps dangling at her belt. She suspected the latter of malicious coquetry and delicately hinted as much.

"No, no!" cried Ernest. "Upon my honor, I never knew her to give me a word or look that might——"

"No, of course *you* didn't know it," consoled Mrs. Billy.

"It's my fault alone. You see, I'm horribly quick to appreciate things, such very different things." He raised his dark, melancholy eyes. "Do you—do you believe in the duality of the soul?"

"The *what*? You'd better ask Billy about that; he'll read you things about it out of Browning. You see, Billy has the beliefs of the family and I have the facts. Now, coming to facts," and she laid an emphasizing forefinger on her palm, "have you told anyone else about this—this false alarm?"

"Nobody knows," said Ernest meekly; "we agreed to keep it secret."

Mrs. Billy nodded approval. "And do you think you could mend matters with Pauline?"

"I—I think so," he murmured; "but isn't it too late for that?"

She reminded him that it was never too late to mend, adding, "Now, don't go anywhere or see anyone until you hear from me. Goodness knows what you'd do next."

Ernest departed feeling like a five-year-old child, and no doubt Mrs. Billy, who smiled a sad, mother-like smile after him, regarded him as such. She was convinced that Elsie had played the mischief-making coquette, and of course one always wants to see the true lovers win out. In that luckless moment Mrs. Billy constituted herself god of the machine.

The next afternoon she paid calls; and what more natural than for her to welcome the Altons home? Mrs.

Alton had gone driving, but Elsie skipped downstairs and poured tea. She looked very fluffy and fascinating. "Poor, defenseless boy!" sighed Mrs. Billy to herself. She did not try to draw Elsie out; she just told her things.

"News, my dear? Not a scrap! (Yes, I'll take lemon, thank you.) That is, nothing except the engagement—now, really, I've no business to repeat this, for it's not supposed to be known, though they say that it happened some while ago. (Sugar, please, two lumps.) Can't you guess? People seem to think she's too good for him; still, I'd hate to see anything come between them. Why, of course I mean Mr. Weevil and Pauline Macaulay. Careful! There, it's gone!"

But Mrs. Billy read unmistakably by the other's face that something more than a teacup had been broken. In fact, she had made one sad miscalculation.

"Heavens, what a mess!" cried Elsie between a laugh and a sob, as she flew off for a maid; and Mrs. Billy, quite without reference to the pools of tea on the carpet, repeated that ejaculation. Then Mrs. Alton came in from her drive, with tedious descriptions of California scenery, but Elsie did not appear again.

To say that Mrs. Billy experienced a sensation of candy-stealing, nest-robbing meanness would be pale and effete; she felt humiliated clear through. When Ernest called two days later she did not have to be told that he had received a letter from Elsie and that the engagement was broken. Neither one asked any questions of the other; they just sat a while like a pair of conspirators in the public stocks; then stole off in opposite directions with hardly as much as a good-bye.

The next night Ernest drifted back to his partner in crime. Piquin, who had taken quite a fancy to him from the first because he evinced an interest in Browning, read him "The Ring and the Book" for two hours and wrung his hand with, "Come again soon." What Mrs. Billy said afterward in the privacy of the veranda

was, "Do hurry up matters with Pauline and get this awful thing over"; to which Ernest responded dejectedly, "Somehow, I haven't the heart."

Perhaps he hoped to find a stimulus in Browning, for he did come again very soon; and again Piquin read "The Ring and the Book" while Mrs. Billy bent over her work, wondering how any man could understand such stuff, particularly one whose soulful eyes, whenever she glanced up, dropped bashfully from her own to the ring of pansies which she was embroidering. In fact, Ernest seemed more interested in the Ring than in the Book.

"Wonderful fellow, Browning!" beamed Piquin from over his glasses. "What powers of observation! I like a man who sees right through everything going on around him. You really must call again soon."

"Don't come here again," Mrs. Billy told Ernest, privately abrogating her husband's cordialities, "until you can give me some good news about Pauline and yourself."

Thus exhorted, Ernest hastened to comply. In fact, he returned, the very next evening, to say that he had made his peace with Pauline and hoped for rapid progress. This occupied five minutes which was followed by two solid hours of Browning, embroidery and bashful contemplation.

Ernest continued to call nightly, and each time he had some slight encouragement to report, until Mrs. Billy began to breathe with more ease, anticipating that her social forgery was about to be legitimated.

Now, though pursuing be rapture, confiding is not without charms. Ernest burned to confide freely, largely, yet all he admitted to Mrs. Billy's constant questions was a lame, "No, not yet," or, "Well, it's—it's coming on." When the ratio of confidence-calls to courtship-calls is as six to one, a change in affairs may be safely predicted without fortune-telling.

The change was precipitated on the day that Elsie and Pauline were lured unsuspectingly to the house of a mutual friend, and made to know each

other over afternoon tea. Neither found the antipathy which she had expected; on the contrary, by the time they had exchanged calls, barriers were down in the interest of one common, consuming topic. That Pauline had never been engaged to Ernest, that Mrs. Billy had broken off relations between him and Elsie by an obvious stratagem, and, finally, that Ernest had been dancing attendance on Mrs. Billy ever since; these three points, joined together, formed—well, geometry was never plainer.

It is amazing how quickly two women will bury the hatchet, to dig it up again for use on a third. These two did nothing violent or rash; they just aired the story of Ernest's capture and let the public do the rest. As an instrument of vengeance the public is swift and sure and the victim does not die upon your own front piazza. Within a week Mrs. Billy received Ernest with a flushed face and stiff, monosyllabic greeting. Piquin was upstairs writing letters, and there was to be no Browning that night.

"You can come in for five minutes," said Mrs. Billy, as she led Ernest into the parlor, "because it will take just that long for me to say what I have to tell you. Have you heard—? No, I see you haven't heard the horrid things people are saying about me—about us." She warmed his chivalry with a few samples. "I suppose it's partly my fault, but I did want to help you with Pauline. Now, don't do anything rash or go trying to disprove things by shooting people; if you're grateful for what I've done, help me to prove the utter absurdity of these rumors by simply shaking hands and saying good night and good-bye."

"Good-bye?" he echoed stupidly. "Do you mean that I must never come here again, just to sit and look——?"

"To listen!" she corrected sweetly. "Of course, Billy'll miss you and I'll miss you and Browning'll miss you, and you'll miss us all three. Isn't public opinion hateful? But you'll be doing me a great service and I know, I'm *sure* I can depend upon you."

And then came the moment of Ernest's immense ingratitude. The hand which Mrs. Billy extended he took between his two hands and vowed that she could depend upon him—yes, through all time and eternity; he would prove it by staying away for a week, a fortnight, a whole month, if necessary. In incoherent snatches he announced the life-devotion of his whole, sincere self. Most men, he said, had imagined that they were in love; he had imagined it at times himself; but now, as never before, he felt that pure, unselfish flame which asks only for friendship.

"Oh, can't you understand?" he pleaded. "I'm not sentimental, nor insincere, but there's something in me that reaches out, reaches out for things, such very different things. Once I asked if you believed in the duality of the soul——"

"So you did," interposed Mrs. Billy with heroic presence of mind, "and I told you to ask my husband about it. Really, he'd be delighted. As for the rest of it, why, that's absurd; you can't mean it, Ernest, you simply can't. You're just mistaking the warmth of a friendship for which I'm ever so grateful. Tomorrow morning you'll feel differently and see the sense of doing as I ask. And now I'll send down Billy to tell you all about that duality business."

And before Ernest had recovered from her superb effrontery she had fled upstairs to her room where, once behind locked doors, she collapsed into a wreck of retribution.

For a fortnight thereafter Ernest visited her with the seven plagues of despised love. He wrote her daily, haunted her doors despite rebuffs and waited in ambush on the street, at the Country Club, and behind the church steps to swoop down upon her with indignant declarations that he had done nothing, that he wanted nothing but to be her devoted friend. Public opinion he bitterly consigned to the usual place. His protestations always swelled into a hissing crescendo which the merest man at a block's distance could not possibly have mistaken for

friendship. Mrs. Billy shuddered and longed to stop her ears; she would have telegraphed Mrs. Weevil, but that lady had just left with her daughter for Southern France, Ernest having declined the trip, so he wrote, on account of his legal studies.

At last, realizing that Ernest, unwed, was a perpetual menace to womankind, Mrs. Billy took a bold step. Of his earliest confidences there still lingered in her memory a name and an address. She went into town, one morning, found the address and inquired for the name. As to what potent, peace-making arguments she advanced during the interview which ensued, and what mutual friends she contrived to discover for appearance's sake, we will not inquire. All she said to Piquin, upon returning, was, "I've asked Alice Duran to come for a little visit. You've heard Ernest mention her; she's a great friend of his and he's crazy to have her out for a few days."

Alice proved to be a simple, whole-hearted girl, quite a foot shorter than Ernest and but a few years his senior; she had appealing eyes, a demure smile and a very soft, submissive voice. Perhaps her peculiar charm lay in just a wee trace of quiet self-reliance. Mrs. Weevil's only possible objection to her could have been that she was a self-supporting widow with one little boy.

The reconciliation took place on the Country Club veranda amid the usual Saturday-afternoon throng. Ernest, pressing through the ranks to where Mrs. Billy's white plume shone, was suddenly transfixed by the announcement, "My dear, you know Mr. Weevil, of course"; while something small tackled him at the knees, piping shrilly, "Oh, mama, it's Unkie Ernest tum back, and we'll never, never let him run away any more!"

"Thank goodness that's done!" breathed Mrs. Billy. And she stole off to the tea-room to save the fragments of whatever friendship there might be left her among womankind.

That night she took Ernest home to dinner, and for a week thereafter he had the freedom of the house and horses, to-

gether with every stimulant for courtship that her brain could devise. She sent the couple out riding, driving and walking while she played nursery-maid and prepared Bobby for a nice, new papa. "They were boy and girl together," she confided to every acquaintance on whom she could lay hands. "Oh, it takes a sentimental old married woman like myself to patch up these early love-affairs!" In fact, by the time she got through it was sufficiently understood that she had been endeavoring merely to save up Ernest for his old, first love.

At the week-end little Mrs. Duran drew her hostess aside.

"You know," she explained in her softest, most submissive tones, "Ernest has decided to move back to town, and he thinks he'll take me in with him tomorrow. He says he can read law just as well there, and he wants to be near me so that he can make plans for the future. He's quite decided that nothing shall ever come between us again. Aren't you, dear?"

And Ernest murmured a meek, "Yes."

Mrs. Billy drove them down to the station next morning. "You've made me so happy! How can I ever repay you?" said Mrs. Duran (there were tears in her eyes) as she kissed Mrs. Billy good-bye. And Mrs. Billy was burning to tell her exactly the same things.

"I'll think of you all my life," said Ernest. (He had run back to the carriage, having carefully remembered to forget his gloves.) "You're the most wonderful woman I ever knew." His melancholy eyes met hers for the last time as he added slowly, "There's nothing in the world that I wouldn't do for your sake if you just lifted your little finger."

Whereat Mrs. Billy pulled off her glove, raised one small, bare digit and whispered fervently, "Then, for heaven's sake, get married!"

And that night when Piquin had read her almost asleep, for want of a better listener, she suddenly sat up wide-eyed and asked him to repeat the

last verse. Piquin obliged as follows:
 " 'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,
 And matter enough to save one's own;
 Yet think of my friend and the burning coals
 He played with for bits of stone."

Then he closed the book and removed his glasses, yawning:

"It's really quite dull without Ernest around—don't you think so?"



LYRIC LIFE

By Edith M. Thomas

O DO not ask me what I deem
 Of all that men have said, or done;
 I will but sing you of a Dream
 In which I walk—with which am one.

'Tis full of loveliness and fears,
 Of griefs that have the face of joy,
 Of joy that hath no word but tears;
 And bold it is—and passing coy!

Mine, even from my earliest days,
 When I stepped softly forth at morn,
 And, breathless, trod in garden-ways,
 'Midst sister-blossoms—later-born.

Mine, even yet, when I can lean,
 And hear the sighing souls of flowers
 That reach their paradise, unseen—
 Where, too, went my lost Morning Hours!

This Dream, that carries me along,
 By Music is, itself, impelled:
 Upon my lips there is no song
 But is by Under-Song upheld!

So, do not ask me what I deem
 Of all that ye may say, or do:
 Before your eyes I wave the Dream—
 And ye shall see that It is true!

It hath not failed me, young or old,
 More secrets of Man's heart to show,
 Than all your sages can unfold,
 Or they that shepherd souls may know.

A SAVIOR OF SOULS

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

THE July afternoon sun poured down with relentless force upon the straight white road and the long stretch of shadeless hayfields that bordered it. The road led to Bull's Head, and to Althea Bradford, stepping out of the cool rectory hall into the quivering heat, it symbolized the straight path of duty. Duty was the passion of Althea's delicately austere life. Almost in her childhood she had begun to realize the responsibility of the parish poor. That she had touched life only vicariously through the lives she strove to lighten and uplift was written in the unawakened wistfulness of her face, which gave an illusive impression of girlishness, although her first youth was past.

Bull's Head, a settlement of unsavory reputation, was included in Dr. Bradford's parish, and shortly after his arrival at Hadley six months before Althea had inaugurated the afternoon Bible class toward which she was now directing her steps; for upon the moral rehabilitation of Bull's Head—abandoned in despair by Dr. Bradford's predecessor—Althea had set her virginal heart. The people of Bull's Head were, in the language of the rector, "unregenerate." Mrs. Sears, the president of the Hadley Literary Society, said they were "unmoral." Ellen, the rectory's philosophic maid-of-all-work, called them a "bad lot"—with which brief characterization Ellen considered the subject dismissed.

Ellen was not, however, unhumanitarian. Her philosophy of life was included in her own oft-repeated statement that "In this world you has to take folks as you find 'em."

Standing at that moment upon the steps of the rectory side door, coaxing the indifferent rectory cat with a saucer of milk, Ellen paused for a disapproving consideration of her mistress in her Sunday white.

"It ain't no use, Miss Althea. Better leave 'em be and save another whitenin' of them canvas shoes. You won't never whiten none of them souls at Bull's Head."

Althea smiled gravely and hoisted her green sunshade.

"You don't shirk your duties, Ellen. Why do you advise me to neglect mine?"

Ellen set down the cat's saucer before she observed: "Folks sometimes imagines things to be duties which ain't."

Althea started down the dusty road with her habitual measured dignity. It was a gait which invariably brought her to her destination unflushed and unruffled. Beyond the hay-strewn meadows the mountains rose intensely blue, yet not sharply accented, against the sky.

Within sight of the huddled disorder of houses that constituted Bull's Head, she left the highroad and took a short cut through a little wooded grove in the direction of the chapel. A sleepy brook slipped noiselessly through the grass, and the shaded greenness was grateful after the full sunlight. Unconsciously Althea's steps lingered. Under a clump of trees to one side of the path she caught sight of a blue gingham skirt on the grass. As she came nearer, the girl to whom it belonged looked in her direction and smiled. With a little pang of disap-

pointment Althea recognized a member of her Bible class—Myra Perkins.

The girl's face was attractive in a way that Althea was not entirely able to appreciate, although she had recognized in it some quality of superiority that had made Myra stand out in her mind as the most hopeful of the as yet unrepentant sinners of Bull's Head. The girl's hair was a little redder than a horse-chestnut. Her eyes were blue and wide apart, her nose rather short and wide. Her lips, full and red, parted easily over white teeth. It was a face at which almost any man would have looked twice, but to Althea Bradford it represented merely a soul to be saved from the vague and terrible corruption of Bull's Head. She paused.

"Aren't you going to be late to Sunday-school today, Myra?"

Myra hesitated, yet without embarrassment before she confessed: "I ain't goin' today."

A shade passed over Althea's delicate face. "I am so sorry. I would like to have you come every Sunday."

"Yes'm," returned Myra non-committally. She looked down and then up, showing a dimple. At that moment Althea discovered a short-cropped dark head upon the background of the blue gingham skirt and found herself temporarily at a loss for words. "I shall hope to see you next Sunday," she at length concluded.

Myra's face brightened. It was not an unsensitive face, and it had begun to show signs of recognizing her Sunday-school teacher's disappointment. "Yes'm, I guess I'll be there next Sunday sure," she answered.

Althea walked on a little more slowly. She had hoped better things from Myra. The girl had seemed so promising. She was quite irreproachably clean, for one thing—unlike the majority of the other residents of Bull's Head. She had been so regular in her attendance; then, too, the depths of her ignorance had, while they appalled Althea, excited her with the sense of opportunity. She recalled with a half-smile an observation of Ellen's upon the Bible class.

"I guess you feel like I do when I clean house," Ellen had remarked; "I like to see lots of dirt. There ain't no real satisfaction in cleanin' a clean house; an' I guess when you go to whiten souls you get more sense of accomplishin' if you begin with 'em real black."

Yet it was with a distinct lack of that sense of accomplishment that Althea passed from the outer heat and sunshine to the inner breathlessness and glare of the recently constructed Bull's Head chapel.

II

THE thought of Myra's defection troubled Althea the rest of the afternoon. When she went home she mentioned it to Ellen, and Ellen had responded with characteristic brevity: "Most likely that Jim Freeman."

"Is he a nice, respectable young man?" Althea asked anxiously, for Ellen's use of the pronoun had seemed ominously definitive.

Ellen's mouth twisted. "Well—he's a Bull's Header." A moment later she added, "He's got a good-payin' job at the mill. As to how long he holds it—" Ellen's sentence remained prophetically unfinished.

The next afternoon Althea started on a round of parochial calls at Bull's Head. Her experience was, on the whole, more discouraging than any she had had in all her years of ministration. The fact was gradually borne in upon her that Bull's Head had little sympathy with its proposed regeneration. At one house Althea found herself driven to monologue, for her hostess seemed conscious neither of her arrival, her brief stay nor her departure, but continued uninterruptedly her household tasks. Only as Althea delicately picked her way down the rickety steps did she hear a muttered comment which seemed to contain some unmistakably unappreciative reference to her visit.

At another place the sounds of altercation from within were of so pro-

nounced a character that half-way up the long flight of outside steps to the second floor Althea turned and retraced her steps, deciding to postpone her call. At the third house she had been met by one Mrs. Murphy with a fulsome cordiality that the suspicious might have connected with certain fumes which emanated with her speech.

She had left Myra until the last so that it was nearly five o'clock when she reached the white double house pointed out to her by the small and extremely dirty little boy of whom she inquired the way.

It was less depressing than the other homes in Bull's Head. For one thing it was painted, and there were two apple-trees in the yard. The front windows were open and there was a row of red geraniums on either side of the path. The whole little place looked clean and cared for. Myra herself came to the door, smiling and deliciously pretty in a fresh green gingham.

Althea chose to be entertained upon the little porch which Myra called a "stoop." Her social experience in Bull's Head had already awakened a suspicion that Myra's family might not carry out the favorable impression made by Myra herself, and from further acquaintance in Bull's Head her spirit for the moment shrank.

As Myra went inside to "fetch" chairs, Althea caught a glimpse of a man in a rocker reading a newspaper. She saw only the man's head distinctly. She noticed that he had short, thick black hair. It flashed across her that it must be the same head she had seen Sunday afternoon. Perhaps the man was calling on Myra, or it might be that he was her brother. It couldn't be that the child was married.

"What a pleasant home you have, Myra," Althea began as Myra came out with the chairs.

"Yes'm, thank you," responded Myra simply; "we like it."

"Have you a large family?" Althea started in.

"No'm," Myra showed her white teeth; "just us two."

"You and your mother? I think you told me your mother was living."

"Yes'm, but not here. Ma and pa lives to Backuses'."

Backuses! Althea shuddered mentally. "Backuses" was the tenement from which the sounds of altercation had proceeded—from which, in fact, they seldom ceased to proceed, had Althea but known. And this sweet, clean-looking child had come from that home! She had revolted from it, no doubt, she and her brother.

"You used to live there?" Althea began, wishing to put herself in possession of the facts of Myra's life and environment.

"Not long, I didn't. We lived around. Pa wouldn't pay the rent. I worked in the mill before we come here last Fall."

Althea, for all her parish experience, was not resourceful in the matter of drawing out facts, so she found nothing more significant to say than, "You must have found it a pleasant change." To which Myra, with her vivid smile, responded merely, "Yes'm."

It was not until Althea was leaving that the subject of Myra's home life was touched upon again.

Myra stopped as she was escorting her guest to the gate to pick up a fallen green apple on the path, observing, "These apples is near big enough for pie. I must make some. He's terrible fond of pie."

Then it dawned upon Althea that the child must be married. In Myra's class the personal pronoun was generally understood as the wife's designation for her husband. She exclaimed her surprise.

"Is it possible that you are married, Myra? You look such a child."

Myra bit an apple and rejected it violently. "Sour as sorrel," she exclaimed, showing her little white teeth in a smile. Then she answered, "I'm not so terrible young. I'll be eighteen come September."

Then she bade Althea a cordial good evening.

Althea mused about it in her aloof, reserved way as she walked along.

That child married! It was inconceivable. Althea hoped tenderly, uncomprehendingly, that he was good to her. Myra had seemed happy. Her mind was so full of the subject that she spoke to Ellen of it on her return home. Ellen did not answer at once. Althea went on:

"Just imagine that child married and living in a home of her own! Such a nice, neat-looking house, too——"

Ellen looked up. The expression in her face inexplicably arrested Althea's words. Ellen spoke briefly, as usual.

"She ain't married."

"Yes, she is, Ellen. I went to see her this afternoon. Her husband was in the house—at least, I thought I saw him. I didn't meet him. She spoke of him——"

Ellen shook her head grimly. "He ain't her husband."

"But, Ellen——"

"I know they've been livin' together there sence last Fall, but——"

"Ellen!" gasped Althea again. The color flashed hotly over her ascetic face. She turned aside, feeling herself unable to bear even Ellen's eyes upon her in that shocked moment, and looked into the homely sweetness of the kitchen garden with unseeing eyes. At last she exclaimed under her breath with a long, shuddering sigh, "How terrible!"

Ellen gave her a quick glance. "I told you they was a bad lot," she remarked unsentimentally.

Althea, with her face still averted, only said, "I must save her, I *must*! She is so young, she can't be all bad yet!"

Ellen gave her another shrewd glance as she untied her checked green gingham apron and reached up to a hook behind the door for the starched white one which she donned to serve the rectory table.

"Better leave her be," she said.

III

UNDER the trees in the little grove where Althea had discovered the truant

Myra the Sunday afternoon before, the two sat talking. The older woman's face was pale and moved, the girl's flushed and troubled. Her red lips, relaxed and quivering, were those of a child who had been crying. Althea was just beginning to realize herself in a strange and formless world in the darkness of Myra's mind. She found that she had not in the least realized beforehand the nature of her task. Bewildered, ashamed, heart-sick, indescribably shocked, she began slowly to see that the girl did not understand. Althea found herself adrift, anchorless upon a strange sea. Myra had not seemed so different from the other village girls of her experience, yet it seemed now that she was a being speaking another language.

"If you will not leave him, then, Myra," she said at last, "you are surely willing to marry him. You say you are fond of each other."

Althea waited, but the girl's response came slowly, and when it came it was an unexpected question, "Why?" She raised her young eyes, dark with trouble and confusion, to Althea's shocked face. "What's the use? If I marry him he'll throw me downstairs like Al Soper does his wife. That's what men does when they're husbands."

"But Myra—Myra"—Althea felt as if she were suffocating—"it is *wicked*, it is wrong, it is terribly wrong! Oh, Myra, can't I make you understand?"

The girl's lips quivered. She realized in a troubled, uncomprehending way that something apparently very serious was at stake. Again her eyes questioned Althea's.

"What is it that's so wicked?"

"Oh, Myra, haven't I made you see yet—?" Explicitness about the dreadful fact was almost impossible to Althea. "To—to stay with Jim Freeman when you aren't married to him is very, very wicked."

"Ma was never married to pa, and they never thought they wuz so terrible wicked," Myra reasoned. "The Methodist parson come over once from Hadley like you an' tried to get 'em to

get married, but pa says they'd got on well enough for fifteen year without marryin', an' he guessed they'd do all right without it for fifteen more. We don't none of us think much of marryin' at Bull's Head," Myra concluded calmly.

Althea's lips whitened. It was with difficulty that she continued: "But it is a sin, a terrible sin, that you are committing. Oh, Myra, can't I make you see how wicked it is—how you are grieving the Heavenly Father who loves you? Some day, if you keep on living this dreadful way, you will suffer terribly for it."

Myra's eyes dilated. "Go to hell, you mean, like the Methodist parson talks about?"

Althea hesitated. She believed in preaching the love of Christ, not the fear of hell-fire, yet she saw the effect of the crude idea upon Myra where her own arguments had been unconvincing. In her intense desire to save Myra's soul she compromised.

"If you were to keep on living this way and were to die suddenly some night, you would suffer a very dreadful punishment like what the Methodist minister called hell. You would wish and wish that you had been good, and it would be too late."

The tears brimmed over in Myra's frightened eyes, but she shook her head.

"I don't want to leave him—that Lize Barney'll get him an' he'll take to drink. He ain't drunk a drop sence he's been with me." She began to sob.

Through the disorder of her stunned sensibilities Althea's pity stirred for the girl's suffering.

"Why, then, if you care so much for him, don't you marry him and help him to live a different life?"

But to Althea's great mystification Myra refused again. "I want to keep him. Marryin' ain't no way to keep him. I'd rather go away—"

"Myra, you mustn't talk like that. You *mustn't!*" Althea protested with a white face.

Myra stared at her dully through her tears. "What is it that'll happen to

me after I die ef I stay with him? Something worse'n being beaten?"

"Far, far worse," replied Althea gravely.

"Worse'n bein' burnt to death, like Mag Backus?"

"Worse even than that," Althea assured her. "For the beating and the burning will all be inside of your own heart, and you can never get away from it day or night."

Myra's eyes grew wide and dark with the vague and awful picture Althea's words had conjured up in her primitive mind. She began to cry again tumultuously with her fear and misery.

"Then I'll leave him," she sobbed, "fer a while, anyhow, an' ef it's so terrible wicked not to marry, an' I can't do without him, maybe some day—" Her tears choked her speech.

Althea waited a moment before she forced her to think farther. "What will you do now, Myra? Where will you go?"

"I—dunno," Myra sobbed.

"Would you like to come and take a place at the rectory? We want a second girl to wait on the table and help Ellen. I don't believe you will find the work very hard, and you will have a little room all to yourself." She put out her hand and took Myra's, although the act cost her an effort.

"I'd like to be by you," Myra answered at last unsteadily. "I'll try, Miss Althea."

With a weight of strange misgivings on her heart Althea watched the little figure walk slowly homeward with down-bent head.

IV

THE next day Myra came to begin work at the rectory. Althea saw that her eyes were red and swollen, but of what had passed between the girl and Jim Freeman Myra volunteered but a single observation.

"He talked awful. He wouldn't believe but what I was goin' to some other feller, an' he said when he found out who 'twas he'd kill him." Then with a

little choked sound Myra had left the room, leaving Althea quivering with the horror of this glimpse of raw life opened up before her inexperienced eyes.

The subject was never broached again between them. Myra seemed to all outward appearance as quiet and self-respecting as if she had not come out of Bull's Head. She did her work neatly and well, but Ellen, when consulted on the subject, would only shake her head.

"I don't deny as she's willing and quick and light-handed, but she ain't *settled*. Don't you believe you can ever make anything out of a Bull's Header, Miss Althea, 'cause you won't never do it."

"No one would suspect you of being as charitable as you are to hear you talk, Ellen," Althea answered; but Ellen replied:

"Charity is all right, but I guess I've got a little common sense, an' that's a good thing, too."

And though Althea's belief in her own ability to save Myra's soul remained unshaken, she could not suppress an undercurrent of uneasiness at Ellen's words. Certain other episodes of "hired men" who had promised well and disappointed miserably had made her recognize Ellen's powers of prophecy as worthy of consideration.

One day Althea asked her, "Aren't you happy here, Myra?"

It was a moment before Myra answered, "I like you, Miss Althea."

"There are some very sweet girls in the Girls' Friendly Circle you have joined. Haven't you made friends with any of them?"

Again Myra did not answer immediately. When she did it was with a subdued flash in the eyes that had once been so smiling.

"The girls say they won't have nothing to do with the likes of me. When your back's turned they won't speak to me. And the boys tries to kiss me, but they don't speak to me nice like Jim—" Then her voice broke and she shut her red lips into a tight line.

"I must speak to the girls," said Althea in a shocked, troubled voice, but even as she said it she appreciated

the girls' side of it. How could they help feeling so?—nice girls. But they must not be unkind to Myra.

"I don't want you to speak to 'em," Myra returned roughly. "I don't want nothin' to do with them, neither. I hate them, *hate* them, *hate* them!" And she flashed passionately out of the room.

Althea noticed after that that the unconscious look had gone out of Myra's eyes. They were no longer child's eyes and they were no longer happy. Her step had lost its lightness and her cheeks their color. She was a different girl. Althea troubled over it unselfishly. "I can't understand it now that she is living a good life away from those terrible people. There must be some way in which I have failed in my duty to her."

And she racked her brain to think of little ways in which to make Myra happier. She hung a new picture in her room, then some fresh white curtains, but Myra received all attentions with unsmiling thanks. Once she gave her one of Mrs. Whitney's books and made the shocking discovery that Myra could barely read.

One day she went to a trunk and brought out a new blue-and-white dimity, the present of a prosperous relative. Althea had intended to have it made up for herself, but she took it with her gentle smile and offered it to Myra. To her surprise the girl's eyes overflowed with tears and she turned from the dainty fabric sharply.

"I thought you would like it, the blue would be so becoming to you," urged Althea, puzzled and disappointed. But Myra shook her averted head.

"I don't want it, Miss Althea. I don't care nothin' about clothes no more. I don't want it."

The next day she came upon Myra lying in the grass in the field behind the house, sobbing fiercely. The sound of it went to Althea's tender heart, and for the first time forgetting that Myra was a fallen woman, remembering only that she was an unhappy child, she sat down beside her and put her arm over

the heaving shoulders; but Myra shook off the sympathetic arm savagely.

"Don't you touch me! You think I ain't fit to touch, anyhow—'twas you made me leave him—oh, the soft fool I was!"

"Myra, Myra, my poor child, what is it that is hurting you so? Tell me."

"I tol' you he'd do it. He sez so when I come away. 'Don't you never come back here,' he sez. 'I'll drink myself into the ditch,' he sez—an' he's done it."

"Myra, I don't understand just what is the trouble. Can't you tell me, and perhaps I can help you?"

"No," Myra answered harshly, breathless with her sobs, "it ain't nothin' you kin help. You ain't never belonged to a man an' left him an' had him go bad."

"Myra!" Althea gasped and drew back her hand as if she had touched something that scorched her. Her whole being was shivering from the contact with this dreadful thing. She was stunned into silence.

Myra talked on brokenly, incoherent with her sobs.

"He's goin' with Lize Barney, like I said he would, an' he's near to losin' his job, an' it's my fault—I done it to him. I hadn't ought to 've left him——"

"Myra," Althea had at last brought her disordered faculties under control and forced the consideration of Myra's primitive suffering before her own sense of violation, "Myra, if it is unhappiness about you that has driven Jim to this, it proves that it would have been better for you to have married him if you care for him and want to keep him straight."

She waited, but Myra only answered with her sobs. She repeated her advice gently: "Why don't you marry him now, Myra?"

But Myra went on as if she had not heard her:

"An' now she's in my house, an' she's got my flowers an' my kitchen——"

She rose suddenly, gasping, sobbing. "She ain't nothin' to him. He'd never care for the likes o' Lize Barney. I'm goin' back. I'm goin' back to him

right now. I don't care if it's a sin. I'm goin' back——"

"Then let father marry you," urged Althea, but Myra ran off, stumbling through the grass, blind with her tears, without answering.

Stunned, overwhelmed by this glimpse into a human heart, the dismayed Althea realized, although she could not understand, that these opposing ideas of shame and of marriage were to Myra an uncomprehended detail beside the great simple fact of her loss and fierce loneliness for the man she loved. "For I suppose she does love him in her way," reflected Althea, yet with a maidenly aloofness from the thought. Dimly she realized that the gulf which separated her from the understanding of seventeen-year-old Myra was deeper even than any distinction of class or morals.

V

FIVE o'clock came, and then six, and Myra had not returned. Ellen's face as she set the table was significant.

"Is it Myra's afternoon out?" inquired the rector as he helped himself to cold ham.

"She went out this afternoon and hasn't come back yet," Althea explained conscientiously, after a moment's hesitation.

The rector lifted his eyebrows. "I have never felt entirely confident of the success of that experiment."

"Father, don't say that," Althea pleaded. "She has behaved so nicely and done her work so well."

Yet it was with a steadily increasing apprehension that she sat upon the veranda watching the twilight fade over the long white road. Ellen, coming out to discuss breakfast, read her thought.

"It ain't no use, Miss Althea. She ain't a-coming. She's gone back to Bull's Head."

"I can't think that." Althea's fine face was disturbed with the foreboding which Ellen's words had voiced. "She was unhappy when she went away.

She will come back." After a moment she added, "If she hasn't come by to-morrow morning I will go over and see what is the matter."

Then with an effort she brought her disturbed faculties to the contemplation of breakfast.

It was dark when she thought she heard the sound of someone moving in the shrubberies, and without stopping to think she hurried in the direction of the sound. In the stream of light from the rector's study window she met Myra face to face.

"Oh, Myra, I am so glad," she began; then the look in Myra's face stopped her. A fear of she knew not what began to steal over her.

"Myra, what is it? Where are you going?"

"He don't want me no more," was Myra's strange answer. "He sez he'd rather have Lize. He turned me out. He don't want me no more."

"Dear Myra"—the misery in the girl's face reached through Althea's frozen immaturity—"don't feel so unhappy. Try to forget it." She tried to take Myra's hand, but Myra drew back from her sharply.

"Don't you touch me! 'Twas you turned me agin' him. You told me 'twas sin. I was happy till you told me 'twas sin. We was happy . . . an' now he don't want me no more." And breaking from Althea's detaining hand, Myra turned and ran out the gate and down the road. It was only a moment that Althea hesitated, struggling with her foreboding; then she started to follow. Ellen, observing them both from the window, decided to follow also.

"You never can tell what a Bull's Header'll set out to do," muttered Ellen as she hurried along after Althea. Ahead in the gray darkness Althea saw the little figure running in the *opposite* direction from Bull's Head. Where was she going? As she wondered, she saw indistinctly yet unmistakably that Myra left the highroad and ran into an open field. What was there? The stone quarry. What would Myra go there for? Just the instinct of the wild creature to crawl off alone in the

moment of suffering? She quickened her steps and began to run; she felt herself trembling. She caught sight of the girl's form, an indistinct silhouette against the sky as she appeared on the rise of ground leading to the quarry; then she lost her.

For a moment the trees on either side of the road hid the field from Althea's sight, and when she reached the path that led to the quarry Myra had disappeared. She ran on in the direction she had seen Myra take. Althea was not accustomed to running; she was out of breath, and her skirts caught on the low, straggling brambles, but an impulse, unanalyzed yet imperative, drove her on. She reached the top of the deserted quarry, but there was no trace of Myra. She must have gone on further. Althea turned and scanned the open field, which had a pearly grayness in the light of the crescent moon, but there was no figure within sight. Then she peered down into the vague darkness of the pit. At first she saw nothing but the masses of loose rock, blurred shapes in the faint moonlight; then with a sick thrill that she never forgot until her dying day, she made out an indistinct dark form lying in the shadow of a rock.

A moment she stared, holding her breath; then, scarcely able to see for the faint horror of fear that possessed her, she turned and retraced her steps down the edge of the quarry to the bottom. There she met Ellen, who had just overtaken her.

"What is it?" Ellen managed to get out breathlessly.

"Come—I don't know," was Althea's distracted answer.

They picked their way in silence over the loose stones. A few feet away from the dark spot they paused, for, inexplicably, they both knew. It was Althea who went forward and knelt down by the little broken figure. She felt for the girl's heart; it was quite still.

Ellen drew nearer slowly. "Is she dead?" she asked in an awestruck whisper. Althea bowed her head.

Then in the silence they heard hurried footsteps coming toward them,

stumbling over the loose stones. It was not until they reached her side that Althea looked up; then she saw a young man, hatless, breathless, haggard.

"Myra, Myra!" he gasped. "Is she here?" Then he caught sight of the motionless figure. He staggered up. "It ain't Myra—that ain't Myra!" He fell on his knees beside her and laid his head against her heart, and with a strange, terrible, inarticulate cry flung himself on the girl's body.

"Myra—Myra, speak to me! I don't care nothin' for Lize! I didn't mean it—I never wanted no one but you, Myra! Myra, speak to me——"

"Oh, Ellen!" cried Althea, "I can't bear it!" She caught at the older woman's shoulder to steady herself. "I tried to do right."

"There, there!" was all Ellen could say.

The terrible sound of a man's sobbing filled the silence. Althea shivered in Ellen's arms. The tears began to run down Ellen's face.

"Oh, Miss Althea, you'd ought to have let 'em be!"

But Althea cried out of her intolerable anguish of self-reproach, "Oh, Ellen, perhaps I have saved her soul!"



DIM HOURS OF DUSK

By Sinclair Lewis

DIM hours of dusk with magic hue
 Enchant the daylight's gold and blue.
 The happy robin homeward goes,
 And dainty duodecimos
 Show pleasant verses, old and new.

Those whom their ingle dreams endue
 With love of fair old times and true
 Find redolent as Mignonne's rose
 Dim hours of dusk.

Though fragrant pages ever brew
 Sweet charms, not all the evening through
 These linger; Spenser is but prose,
 Unless his flowered book I close
 To brighten with the thought of you
 Dim hours of dusk.



THERE is only one thing longer than a woman's tongue, and that is her memory



IF you can't write cheques, don't try to print kisses.

THE SHEPHERDESS

By Archibald Sullivan

IF I could choose my path of life
From out this world of tangled ways,
I think I'd sooner live and tend
A little flock of all the days.

Upon the bluest hills that are
The fairy hills of Dreams Come True,
I, shepherdess, would tend the flock,
My bread a rose, my cup the dew.

And all the timid days of May,
The blustering days of Winter weather,
The burning days of August time
Would wander wide with me together.

And ere the sun made silver lace
Upon the pillow of the sky,
I'd call a little day to me,
And kiss its mouth—and say, "Good-bye."

And to the world that lay so far
Away from those my pastures blue,
Each morn I'd send another one
From those dear hills of Dreams Come True.

And as the weeks crept slowly by,
And as the months went drifting on,
I, shepherdess, upon the hills,
Would find my flock was nearly gone.

And then when there were fewer still—
Perhaps just only two or three—
My ravished flock upon the hills
Would be exceeding dear to me.

When one December day was left,
A little day of grief and snow,
I'd place my kiss upon its brow,
My last farewell—and bid it go.

Then would I quietly creep away
Behind the sunset's amber rays,
To dream how I had tended well
My little flock of all the days.

PAYING THE PRICE

By Christian Reid

WITH the feeling of one who, taking leave of a foreign country, turns his face homeward to familiar scenes, Paul Langford stepped out of the door of the dingy old house on Tompkins Square that had been his residence for several weeks, and crossing the roadway entered the park, which on this Spring-like afternoon of late Winter was filled with even more than the usual overflow from the streets and tenements around.

Children were everywhere, playing, shouting, laughing, their strange foreign faces contrasting oddly with the Americanese they were talking, while the benches were filled with older people, among whom hardly a word of English was to be heard. All the tongues of Eastern Europe filled the air, and as Langford sat down on the vacant end of a bench, to await the slow coming of a westward-bound car, he was not surprised to hear two men who occupied the other end of the seat talking together in Polish. He listened idly, in order to test his knowledge of the language, of which he had once learned a little. They on their part paid no heed to him—if they noticed him at all judging, no doubt, that he was not likely to understand the tongue in which they spoke—and so he caught, and to his gratification found that he comprehended, some sentences of their conversation.

"The only hope is in the influence of Ladislus," one was saying.

The other shrugged his shoulders. "True," he replied, "but to exert such an influence is difficult."

"But not impossible," the first speaker rejoined. "Mistakes are often

made in announcements of the death of prisoners. If through the old channels a message should reach her——"

"It would have an effect," the other conceded a little reluctantly. "But would it be—excusable?"

"Anything is excusable that serves the cause," was the quick reply. "We are agreed about *that*. And if no other means of influencing her, and through her reaching others, can be found, why, the word from Ladislus must come."

It was at this moment that the westward-bound car came in sight, and as Langford walked out of the square he was conscious of having been interested by this strange fragment of talk. "Odd!" he reflected. "Ladislus is presumably dead, and yet a word from him is to come to influence—whom? Some woman, apparently, whose heart will be racked with the anguish of false hope, that 'the cause' may be served. What cause isn't hard to guess, nor that it is a hopeless one. Russia's extremity may be Poland's opportunity; but neither the extremity nor the opportunity has come yet." As he stepped on the platform of the car he glanced again over at the square where the two men were still sitting on the bench he had left. "Too bad that I'll never know any more," he thought regretfully. "It would make a good opening for a story, if it were not a trifle too melodramatic. The trouble is that life has a tendency to be melodramatic, which it is the mission of art to correct."

An hour or two later he had reason to meditate on another tendency of life which art—especially the form of art

which calls itself realistic—regards disapprovingly. This is the tendency to coincidence. From whatever obscure cause it arises, we are all familiar with the fact, which nevertheless now and again startles us, that a subject which has once been thrust upon our attention is oddly apt to be encountered soon again, generally in the most unexpected manner. Nothing, for example, could have been further from Langford's thoughts than the conversation he had overheard in Tompkins Square, nothing more incredible to his imagination than that he was bringing himself into direct touch with certain realities behind the words to which he had idly listened, when he opened the door which admitted him into Bruce Saville's studio.

As he entered, pushing aside a heavy portière, he faced all the light that was left of the dying day, which streamed through two great windows and revealed half-a-dozen beautifully gowned women, and as many men, lounging amid the artistic confusion and luxury of the great oblong room, their talk and laughter mingling with the light tinkle of silver spoons in delicate cups, as they drank the tea which one of the women was languidly pouring from a samovar.

"Hullo, Langford!" It was the cordial voice of the artist host. "Mrs. Armytage has just been asking what has become of you. I told her that you might be in the Far East for all that your friends know to the contrary."

"He means the far east of New York," Langford explained to the lady at the tea-table, who held out a friendly hand to him. "I've been staying over there with Winterton—he's absorbed in Settlement work, you know."

"Hugh Winterton?" Mrs. Armytage asked. "I've heard that he has gone quite crazy over socialistic theories, but you don't mean that you—"

"Have gone crazy also?" Langford smiled. "I hope not. While I admire Winterton's zeal, I don't share all his theories, and I certainly don't

feel myself capable of emulating his labors."

"Then what have you been doing? One doesn't go to the East Side for social amusement."

"I am almost ashamed to say, in the light of other people's philanthropic motives, that I have been there solely for selfish purposes, in search of literary material, realistic details, all those things that for the literary worker are briefly comprehended under the head of 'copy.'"

"But I thought that *you*—!" Mrs. Armytage's lifted eyebrows emphasized her surprise.

"Evolved them from my inner consciousness, as the German writer evolved the camel? I'm not so—capable, shall I say, or presumptuous? Art is very exacting in her demands in these days, and accuracy is considered desirable—unless one happens to be producing historical fiction."

"Hear the scoffer!" laughed a man near-by. "It's pure envy, this lofty attitude on Langford's part. His books don't sell by the tens of thousands, like the cape-and-sword romances, you know."

"Fancy Mr. Langford's artistic work selling by the tens of thousands," cried a handsome girl indignantly, while Langford calmly applied himself to his tea. "It's absurd to suggest such a thing."

"Quite so," the man agreed, "though whether the absurdity strikes his publisher in an altogether amusing light one may venture to doubt. What publishers ardently desire are books that *will* sell in the tens of thousands, and let high art go hang!"

"It does hang mostly—doesn't it?—poor high art!" mocked another voice—a voice so rich and sweet, so full of the music of deep contralto notes, that Langford almost spilled his tea on a silken gown near him as he turned quickly to see who had spoken.

All the light still left in the pallid sky seemed to concentrate upon her, as she sat on a divan, leaning against a pile of cushions rich with Oriental embroideries, this woman whom he

divined at once to have herself a flavor of things strange and foreign. It did not occur to him to consider whether or not she was beautiful, but he saw at a glance that she possessed something rarer and finer than beauty, the perilous gift of fascination. It had sounded in the first note of her voice, and it struck him now with the force of a blow as he met the singular jade-colored eyes set in the clear-cut face, with its complexion of wonderful fairness, and crown of pale golden hair. He had never seen her before, and that he felt was a little curious, since few outsiders were admitted to this intimate circle of artists and art-lovers who met now and again in Bruce Saville's studio.

"Who is she?" he asked in a low voice of Mrs. Armytage, who as Saville's cousin generally acted as chaperon on the occasions of his studio teas.

Mrs. Armytage smiled. "There are several persons present to whom the feminine pronoun would apply," she said, "but I take it for granted that you mean Madame Czartoryska."

"Of course I mean the only person with whom I am not acquainted," Langford answered. "And who is Madame Czartoryska?"

"Well, she is a Polish countess, to begin with, although she insists on dropping her title over here, which I consider a mistake, for she would have much more success if her rank were known, and it is genuine rank, for Bruce knew her family in Warsaw, and they belong to the old Polish nobility."

"I'm afraid that doesn't mean much to the average American; so perhaps Madame Czartoryska is wise in dropping her title. But what is she besides a Polish countess?"

"She is a most charming woman, and a wonderful musician, who might have been a great singer if she had not lost her voice in the saddest possible manner."

"And that was——?"

"When she heard of the death of her husband in Siberia. They had hardly

been married when he was torn away from her on suspicion of having been engaged in political plots, and without trial of any kind—by 'administrative process' I think they call it—sent to Siberia. His estates were also confiscated, and Madame Czartoryska was in Milan, studying for the lyric stage, when she heard that he was dead. How he died, whether from hardship or violence, she does not know to this day. She simply received an official notification of his death, and the shock was so great that when she recovered from the illness that resulted from it, she had lost her voice—her glorious voice!"

Langford glanced at the woman with the jewel-like eyes and golden hair. "No wonder she looks and speaks as she does," he said. "When a human soul has touched tragedy—real tragedy—it leaves its ineffaceable mark. And afterward?"

"Afterward she came to America. She teaches music—think of it, that woman!—although she is a superb pianist, and has had many offers to appear professionally. Altogether she is a most interesting person, and since you are in search of types, I don't see how you can do better than to study her."

"I quite agree with you," Langford said. "Pray present me."

Madame Czartoryska looked up with a smile when she heard the name which Mrs. Armytage murmured, and by a slight movement invited Langford to a seat on the couch beside her.

"This is a little strange—I mean our meeting," she said in perfectly pure English, which had yet, like herself, a foreign flavor, "for it was only a day or two ago that, on reading one of your books, I was almost tempted to write to you—anonymously, of course."

Langford felt himself flush like a boy with pleasure. "I wonder," he said, "which of my books was fortunate enough to interest you."

"It was 'The Wings of Icarus.'"

"Ah!" The quick light in his eyes was for the fact that this book was not only his own favorite of all that he had

written, but also his touchstone for his friends and sometimes too voluble admirers. For in it he had put his deepest thoughts on those questions which beset the modern soul, and in passionate sincerity had dealt with what are known as the problems of the day. So in all who liked it he recognized a comradeship of the intellect and of the spirit which pleased him, but had never pleased him more than in this woman with the tragic story and the strange, fascinating face. "I am glad you like that book," he went on after a moment, "for there is more of myself in it than in anything else I have written, and I am tempted to believe that there must be a bond of sympathy between us."

"A certain sympathy, yes," she assented, "but when I thought of writing to you it was not only to tell you that I liked the book—many people must have told you that—but to say where and why I did not like it."

"That is better yet," he declared. "Discerning criticism is always preferable to uncritical praise. I should be sorry that you had not followed your impulse but for the fact that by this lucky chance of meeting you, I may hear what you would have written. And to hear it will have distinct advantage over reading it."

She smiled again. "Chiefly, no doubt, the advantage of being able to answer."

"That, of course, is an advantage," he conceded, "but I should not call it the chief one. The greatest advantage is the pleasure of knowing you."

"If you really mean that," she said, "perhaps you will care to come to see me? My friends sometimes drop in about five o'clock for a cup of tea, although I am a little out of the way. I am living in Gramercy Park."

"Nothing will give me more pleasure than to present myself for a cup of tea and a dose of criticism," he assured her. "And as for Gramercy Park being out of the way, why, my present residence is on Tompkins Square—of which, however, you have probably never heard."

"Oh, yes," she said. "I know it

very well. Some of my best friends live in that neighborhood."

"Some of your—" He caught himself quickly. "I understand—you mean some of your countrypeople."

"And also some of my best friends," she repeated. Then she looked up at Saville, who had drawn near. "I am telling Mr. Langford," she said, "that he is mistaken in thinking that I am not familiar with Tompkins Square and its surroundings."

"If you want copy, indeed," said Saville, addressing Langford, "you should ask permission to follow Madame Czartoryska when she walks through some parts of the East Side. It is like the progress of royalty." He paused an instant. "Royalty—bah! To see those Polish men, women and children kissing her hand, and even her dress, is to think of the progress of a saint."

"They come, many of them, from my own province and some of them from the old estates of my family," Madame Czartoryska explained.

"They would die for Countess Helena," Saville said, regarding her with a look which at once enlightened and oddly startled Langford.

But Madame Czartoryska shook her head. "That is very doubtful," she replied. "It is only certain that Countess Helena would willingly die for them, or the beloved land from which they come."

The recollection of the look which he had surprised in Saville's eyes returned to Langford when on the first occasion that he availed himself of Madame Czartoryska's permission to visit her, and entered the spacious drawing-room of the pleasant old-fashioned house in which she lived in Gramercy Park, he found Saville established there, with an unmistakable *ami de la maison* air. And yet there was no doubt that his presence could have been easily explained on the ground that the atmosphere of this drawing-room was thoroughly sympathetic to him. It was not only that the people who came and went were all noteworthy in one way or

another, and some of them widely famous, as for example the musician who sat at the piano weaving soft harmonies when Langford entered, but it was that the hostess possessed in extreme degree the social gift in which women of the Slav race excel all others—the charm which made a Princess de Lieven and a Madame Swetchine unapproachable in their generation.

Something like this Langford remarked to Saville when they presently left the house together, and he thought the other's smile a trifle enigmatic as he replied:

"Yes, she is a fine example of the highest Slav type, Countess Helena, but she has also individual characteristics that tend so much to fascination that if you were younger and more impressionable, I should be tempted to utter one of the warnings which nobody ever heeds."

Langford lifted his eyebrows. "Why," he asked, "should I be supposed to need warning more than yourself?"

"Because," Saville replied, "you are at the point where it might presumably do some good; whereas I have long since passed it." They walked on for a moment in silence before he added: "The chief result of knowing such a woman as that—of knowing her well, I mean—is that all other women become insipid and tasteless by comparison. And that is sometimes a pity."

"As far as I am concerned," Langford said, "I have never yet found a woman who was capable of stirring a deep sensation in me, and—I speak now as a writer—to obtain that sensation I would be willing to pay any price."

"In other words, you are willing to experiment on yourself."

"If you like to put it so. Isn't it natural to have some curiosity to know the thing—the real thing, not a shallow counterfeit—on which all art, all poetry, human nature itself, is built?"

"Natural enough," Saville assented. "The trouble with you," he added, "has been that you have always been so intent on analyzing your emotions that you've never given any of them a

chance to carry you off your feet; but if a passion for this woman takes hold of you——"

"I shall learn something," Langford said, as the speaker paused expressively.

"Yes," Saville agreed a little drily, "you'll learn something." Then he held up his hand for a cab. "Which way are you going?" he asked. "Can I set you down anywhere?"

It was in this fashion that the acquaintance, which soon became an intimacy, between Langford and the beautiful Polish countess began. At its progress his friends looked on with some surprise, for it was well known that feminine influence had heretofore played a very small part in his existence, notwithstanding that he had liked certain women, admired others, and had been made much of by many. But no woman had ever entered deeply into his life, or indeed touched it below the surface; and those who knew him best had long decided that none ever would. That they began to believe themselves mistaken now was only, however, what might have been expected, since sooner or later the hour strikes for every man, but they agreed in saying that if it had indeed struck for Langford, it was because a woman had crossed his path who was as far removed from the commonplace as even his fastidious taste could desire.

And this explanation was as nearly accurate as such explanations ever are. The attraction which Madame Czartoryska had from the first possessed for him was in great measure the attraction of the unusual, the fascination of something strange, exquisite and profoundly interesting to his imagination, to that passion of the creative artist for new experiences which was strongly alive in him. And so far from having the least inclination to resist an influence as delightful as it was powerful, one which roused in him capabilities of thought and feeling hitherto unsuspected, that quickened his mental processes and, in trite phrase, gave new meaning to life, he flung himself into the association with an ardor which for a time at least asked nothing more

than to enjoy an intercourse which was at once satisfying and stimulating beyond anything he had ever known before.

Naturally, however, this state of content did not last, and finally the inevitable moment came when the expression of his feelings seemed not only natural but irresistible. It was a month or two after their first meeting in the studio that, finding Madame Czartoryska by a rare chance, alone, he told her what she had become to him.

"Understand," he said, "that I am asking nothing whatever of you. I am only telling you as a matter that may possibly interest you, what I give you—what," he added, with an inflection of something like triumph in his voice, "you cannot prevent my giving you."

She looked at him with a troubled expression in her eyes. "You know," she said, "that I would prevent it if I could."

"I am quite sure of that," he answered, "though I don't know why you should wish to prevent it. For I am presumptuous enough to think that I give you something which has a little value."

"That is just the point," she answered. "It has too much value to be given for nothing."

At this he laughed. "How strange," he said, "that you, even you, should be so bound by the conventional view of things as to think that value must be given for value received in such a matter as this. Don't you know that so far from giving nothing in return for my devotion, you have given what is of priceless value to me? You have enriched my life, widened my experience, taught me things I was powerless to learn without you, and for the privilege of knowing you, the wonderful education of loving you, I would be willing, if suffering is necessary, to suffer anything."

He spoke very quietly, but his earnestness made Madame Czartoryska shake her head in protest.

"You talk lightly of suffering," she said. "but I, who know what it is,

would do anything sooner than be the cause of suffering to anyone, but especially to you, who give me a regard that I value so deeply."

"And can I not make you understand what you have given me?" he demanded again. "When I met you I had never sounded the depths of my own nature, though I had written—heaven forgive me!—as if I knew something of the depths of other people's. But it was all guesswork—all. I knew absolutely nothing of the master passion of the earth, of the love which in one form or another lies at the bottom of all heroism and all sacrifice, as of all supreme happiness. To feel that passion, to test it and know it, I said to myself that I would be willing to pay any price—do you understand, *any price*?—and now that you have taught me what it is, and in teaching have given me also the knowledge of yourself, do you think that I am likely to count any suffering as worth mentioning in comparison with what I have gained?"

There was no mistaking the passion which filled his voice now, and Helena Czartoryska, looking away from him, through the window by which they sat, to the park beyond, where buds were swelling and children playing in the Spring sunshine, had a strange, wistful look on her beautiful face.

"You are willing to pay any price," she repeated slowly, "and will count no price too heavy for what you have learned. I wonder if you will still say that when I tell you that the price must be—absence?"

It was a blow for which he was wholly unprepared. "Absence!" he exclaimed—as a man might say, "Death!"

"Absence," she repeated very gently, and now her eyes met his with a great sweetness in their depths. "It cannot be otherwise, my friend, when a man loves a woman who can give him nothing."

"But I have asked nothing," he cried, "nothing beyond what your other friends possess as well as I, the right of seeing you, the happiness of being with you."

Again she shook her head. "Do you not know human nature—you who have studied it so closely—well enough to know that you would not remain satisfied with those things?" she asked. "I speak to you very plainly because I am not like other women—I am one set apart by a great tragedy from any of the possibilities of life, and it would be no less than a crime for me to allow you to remain near me after what you have said today. It would mean unhappiness for you, and pain and remorse for me."

"You force me," he said, "to ask—could it never possibly mean anything else?"

She started as if stung. "See," she cried, "how quickly what I prophesied has come! No"—she paused for an instant and drew in her breath sharply—"it can never mean anything else."

"You mean," he pressed her further, "that your heart is with the man who lies dead in Siberia?"

"Yes, I mean that," she answered passionately, "and I also mean—that I am not sure of his death."

"Not sure!" Langford looked at her with amazement. "Is it possible that during all these years you have been left in doubt?"

"No," she replied, "I was not left in doubt. I received official information of his death. But I have always had a feeling that it might not be true, always an instinct, a hope, that Ladislav still lived—and lately I have heard—"

She paused abruptly, for something in the face before her stopped the words on her lips. "Ladislav!" Langford had repeated the name as if unconsciously, while like a lightning-flash, memory recalled the afternoon when he sat on a bench in Tompkins Square and heard two men talking in Polish of a woman who was to be influenced by a message from Ladislav—though Ladislav was dead. Was this the woman on whom the deception had been practised? As he stared at her, overwhelmed by the thought, she leaned toward him.

"What is it?" she demanded quickly.

"Why do you look so? What do you know—or guess?"

"I know," he answered, after an instant's hesitation, an instant's quick reflection, "something which I should have told you long ago—for strangely enough it came to my knowledge on the afternoon when I first met you—but I never connected the matter with you, and once or twice when I was about to mention it, an interruption occurred. So if my silence has done you a great wrong—"

"What does that matter?" she interrupted impatiently. "A wrong to me is nothing. The question is, what do you know about—Ladislav?"

"Only this," he answered, and told her in as few words as possible what he had heard. It was a very short story, but as she listened, he saw that his instinct of its importance was not mistaken. Her face set itself in stern lines, and her deep eyes burned with a fire he had never seen in them before, although, when he finished, she spoke with the calmness of one trained in self-control.

"I know who the men were," she said, "and if you understood them correctly, there is little doubt that they were speaking of me. But are you sure enough of your knowledge of Polish to be certain that you understood them correctly?"

"I could not venture to say that," he answered. "My knowledge of Polish is very imperfect, and so in deciding whether or not I was mistaken, it is necessary to depend on what lawyers call corroborative evidence. Have you opposed your influence, which is so great among your countrypeople here, to any plan or hope of these men?"

"Yes," she replied without hesitation. "I don't know whether or not you are aware that even in Poland the Terrorists have gained a foothold. Not much indeed as yet. Our people are at once too religious and too honorable to descend to the warfare of assassination by bombs, and so the advocates of that policy are in a small minority. But just now they are making desperate efforts to force their methods

on those who are always hoping and planning for a Polish revolution, and who have taken heart—such heart as they have not known for many long years—from the late reverses of Russia. One of the men whom you saw is an agent of the extreme party, who has been sent to raise money among the Poles in America. He has found my influence inflexibly opposed to him, and so far there is reason to believe that you understood him correctly."

"Then," Langford asked, "is not the conclusion irresistible that I understood his entire meaning correctly, and that any message which you received was false?"

She did not answer for a moment, and the eyes which met his seemed filled with a very anguish of struggling doubt and hope. "It may be so," she said at length, "but there is also a possibility that you were mistaken with regard to the message. That might be genuine, although obtained for the purpose we believe; because the Russians with whom this man is allied have sources of information, means of reaching into the prisons of Siberia, which no Pole possesses who is not affiliated with them. And so I must still believe that there is a chance—a bare chance—that my husband is alive."

A passion of pity seemed to tear Langford's heart. "Great God!" he cried. "Do you mean that you must live in this awful uncertainty—that there is *no* way in which you can be sure?"

She looked at him and in the look was all the deep and bitter hopelessness of those who have felt the iron hand of the great despotism of the North.

"Do you think if there had been any way I should not have tried it long since?" she asked.

"Then," he said suddenly, "here is something that I can do for you. I will go to Siberia, and if effort and gold can accomplish it, I will bring you the proof of your husband's life or death."

"I've heard something odd," said

Saville a few days after this to his cousin, Mrs. Armytage. "Langford has gone to the seat of war in the East, as the special correspondent of the *Trumpet*."

"Langford—Paul Langford!" Mrs. Armytage repeated. "How surprising! What is the meaning of it?"

Saville shrugged his shoulders.

"Who can say? Langford is an uncertain quantity, you know."

"But to return to journalism, when his success in literature has been so great!"

"This isn't exactly journalism. To be successful as a war correspondent a man must have power to write vividly, picturesquely, and with a literary skill quite above that of an ordinary journalist. Langford made a great success in his letters to the *Trumpet* at the time of the Greco-Turkish war, and Barry, the editor—whom I chanced to meet last night—says they wanted him to go to Manchuria for them at the beginning of the war between Russia and Japan. But he refused positively, and so Barry's surprise was great when he walked into his office the other day and offered to go, was indeed in such haste that they could hardly get him off fast enough."

"Odd!" Mrs. Armytage agreed. "Very odd!" She looked meditatively at her cousin. "Do you think Madame Czartoryska has anything to do with it?" she asked.

Saville met her glance with a smile. "You are as quick as most women to divine cause from effect," he said. "The same question has occurred to me, but I am unable to answer it. Indeed, I am certain that there is only one person who can answer it, and that is Madame Czartoryska herself."

"Then," said Mrs. Armytage, "it will never be answered."

Saville was altogether of the same opinion, for he knew even better than the speaker the quality of reserve which distinguished Helena Czartoryska. Nevertheless, he could not resist speaking of Langford's departure when he saw her next, and to his surprise he

evoked a flash of emotion in her face and voice.

"Yes," she said, "Mr. Langford has gone, and I—we shall all miss him very much."

"It was rather a curious, as well as a sudden resolution on his part," Saville observed, regarding her as he spoke, with quiet keenness. "He has become so absorbed in his literary work, and his books have been so brilliantly successful that one could not have expected him to go out again as a war correspondent. It seems a singular waste of fine powers on work which is not of the highest order."

Madame Czartoryska's eyes were lowered, as she handled a little nervously the teacups on the low table before her.

"Genius is always a little erratic, isn't it?" she asked. "And then you forget that every new experience is grist for the writer's mill. I can imagine that to become a war correspondent, with all the experiences involved, might be attractive to a man like Langford."

"She knows why he went, and she is fencing," Saville thought. Aloud he said, "You are right. New experiences appeal to Langford tremendously, but there will be nothing new for him in what he will find in Manchuria. War is always the same, and I chance to know that its gruesome horrors have no attraction for him. On the contrary, he told me when he returned from South Africa that nothing would ever induce him to bring himself into contact with them again. So you see I have ground for surprise as well as regret at his departure."

Madame Czartoryska suddenly lifted her eyes, and to his astonishment he saw that they were filled with a feeling which she made no attempt to conceal. Across the tea-table she leaned toward him, and he almost felt the quick stirring of her breath.

"Be surprised if you like," she said earnestly, "but don't regret that he has gone. Never regret when a man rises to the height of heroic action."

Astonished as he was, and perhaps

because of his astonishment, Saville for once was obtuse. "I don't regard it as a heroic action," he returned, "for a man of Langford's order to expose himself to danger for so small an end, and run the risk of losing to the world powers as rare as they are fine. It isn't as if he were not just at the beginning of his career—a career which some of us, who believe in him, have watched with the deepest interest."

Despite himself a tone of something like reproach came into his voice, for he had now not the least doubt why Langford had gone to the Far East; and although he could not, in the light of a certain past conversation in which Langford had distinctly dared fate, blame Madame Czartoryska for any fascination which she had exercised, he felt that she did not evince the sympathetic understanding of the situation which he would have expected of her. On her side, Madame Czartoryska sank back in her chair with the air of one who has let impulse carry her too far.

"Let us hope—and pray," she said, "that he may return in safety, and that the world may not lose the powers of which you speak. Nobody knows them better than I, and nobody"—her voice sank a little lower—"values his friendship more highly."

Saville had no opportunity to reply, had he wished to do so, for her attention was at that moment claimed by others. But her words, her whole manner held for him but one interpretation. He was now perfectly sure that his first suspicion on hearing of Langford's departure had been correct: that the latter had learned the lesson which he desired to learn so well, that for him, as for many another man, flight had been the only recourse, and a desire for the utmost possible change of scene, and for chances of absorbing action, the explanation of his abrupt departure.

He became even more convinced of this when, as time went on, Langford's letters to the *Trumpet* began to appear. These communications were not only very intermittent, but they were in

great measure devoid of the qualities which had made the former letters from the same hand so striking. There was about them a perfunctory tone, a lack of spirit and vigor, as if they were thrown off by a man whose best energies were given to another pursuit, which astonished others besides Saville.

"Why the deuce was he so keen to go, if he doesn't feel interest enough in the work to do better than this, now he's there?" the puzzled editor of the *Trumpet* demanded of one of his associates, and the latter could only shake his head in reply.

"There's no telling," he said. "Langford was always rather an odd fish. But the public, happily, are not critical, and his name means a good deal."

But before long there came a time when the *Trumpet* was not able to console itself in this manner, for Langford's name no longer appeared at the foot of its letters from the seat of war. Abruptly and without warning his communications ceased, and all endeavors to locate and hear from him proved vain. Nothing could be learned beyond the fact that he had suddenly left Manchuria—not, as it appeared, for the first time—and gone to Siberia. There all trace of him was lost.

The Summer was by this time far advanced, and Autumn was at hand, when Saville, returning from a hunting and fishing expedition in the remote wilds of Canada, opened a newspaper in the first outpost of civilization which he reached, and was inexpressibly startled and shocked to read, under the heading, "Further light on the death of the war correspondent, Paul Langford," the following paragraph:

It is now quite positively stated by a correspondent of the *Daily Mail* that Mr. Langford, whose death was so regretfully noted a few days ago, instead of being the victim of an accident, as at first announced, was in reality killed by the Russian police, while attempting to aid the escape of a political prisoner. According to the correspondent in question, whose statements, however, are denied by the Russian officials, Mr. Langford had used his position as a war correspondent to make certain efforts in behalf of the revolutionary agencies. It is well known that through these agencies

many prisoners yearly escape from Siberia, and it is said that Mr. Langford was particularly interested in discovering one prisoner, over whose fate there hung a dark cloud of mystery, and that he had persisted in inquiries which at last exhausted the patience of those in authority. "The rest is silence." Whether he ever pierced the mystery—exactly in what manner, or for whom he died—we shall probably never know; and although tragedies as sad are no doubt every day occurring in that dark realm of despotism, it is seldom that one has cost a life which gave more brilliant promise than that of this young writer.

The paragraph ended here, but Saville found himself still staring at the paper, as if he saw also printed on it some words which were ringing in his memory—words of Madame Czartoryska: "Never regret," she had said, "when a man rises to the height of heroic action." He had not understood her meaning then, but now, in the light of this story, it was clear. Herself, no doubt, allied with revolutionary schemes, she had drawn Langford not only into sympathy with these, but had induced him to go on the wild and desperate errand of freeing some political prisoner in Siberia. Langford—of all men! A sudden passion of indignation possessed Saville. For such a purpose to throw away such a life! Notwithstanding his admiration for her, he felt that he could not rest until he had faced her sternly and said, "Woman, behold thy work!"

Two days later he rang the bell of her house in New York. The door was opened by a Polish servant, who said mechanically, "The countess is not at home" before she recognized who stood before her. Then she gave a little cry—it seemed of pleasure.

"Oh, Mr. Saville," she said. "I did not know you—the countess has thought you were away—"

"How is the countess, Marya?" he asked, stepping within the hall with the assurance of an old friend.

Marya looked at him with an expression of deep sadness.

"The countess is very ill," she said, "ill as I have not known her since Milan—but perhaps she will see you, Mr. Saville. She has asked for you several times."

"Let her know that I am here," he said, walking into the drawing-room.

As he stood there looking around, something in the aspect of the familiar apartment struck him as an echo of the sadness on the face of the woman who had served Countess Helena so long. It was usually a charming room, always filled, as it seemed, with flowers and sunshine, while the open piano spoke of the joyousness of life and art. But today there were no flowers, the blinds were drawn against the sun, the piano was closed for the first time within his knowledge, and the whole atmosphere was full of an influence which struck like a chill upon the heart. He was still standing, gazing about him with down-drawn, puzzled brows, when the door opened and Madame Czartoryska entered.

All thought of anger, sternness, reproach faded from his mind as he looked at her—this white shadow of a woman, whose golden hair was thrown into strong relief by the pallor of her skin and the unrelieved blackness of her dress. She held out her hand, as she looked at him with eyes that seemed to hold depths of inexpressible sorrow.

"You have heard," she said—"you know that he is dead."

"Yes," he replied, while wonder seized him for her changed aspect, "it is terribly sad! But you—what have you been doing to yourself? You must have been very ill."

"Oh, I—!" She made a gesture of indifference as she sank into a chair and glanced up at him, shuddering a little. "What you don't know," she said in the tone of continuing her first speech, "is that it is my fault."

"You sent him there?" Saville felt that it was as he had divined, yet the impulse to reproach her could not revive before the set anguish of that white face.

"No, I did not send him," she replied, "but I allowed him to go, to take the risk—the fearful risk of what has happened—for me. There seemed"—she flung out her hands with one of the dramatic gestures of her race—"nothing else to do."

"Nothing else to do!" A note of indignation came into Saville's voice as he echoed her words. "Nothing else to do with a man like Langford—a genius so rare, so fine—but to lead him to throw away his life for some mad revolutionary scheme?"

Her jewel-like eyes expanded upon him. "You think *that*?" she breathed. "You think I led him to go for such a purpose—*Mr. Langford*?"

"What else can I think?" Saville returned. "Haven't you just said——?"

"That he went for me—yes. But he did not go for any revolutionary scheme: he went to learn, if possible, whether my husband is alive or dead."

"Your husband!—Count Ladislas Czartoryska!" Saville stared at her. "Do you mean that there is doubt whether he is alive or dead?"

"There has always been doubt—in my mind," she answered, "for in Poland one has heard many terrible things of prisoners in Siberia whose identity, whether intentionally or accidentally, has been lost. Because of this, and because details about Ladislas were so meager, I have never ceased to fancy—to dream—that he might be alive. And a few months ago a message reached me——"

"From him?"

"Apparently from him. I hardly knew whether or not to believe it, but the doubt kept me on the rack, as you may imagine——"

The deep sympathy of his look assured her that he could well imagine.

"Until at last," she hurried on, "I was led to speak of it to Mr. Langford, and he told me that by a singular chance he had one day, while staying over on the East Side, heard two men talking in Polish in Tompkins Square, and they talked of a message which was to come from 'Ladislas,' who was dead, to influence some woman who opposed their plans——"

"Devils!" Saville's hand clenched. "And you were the woman?"

"Presumably. But we could not be sure, neither Mr. Langford nor I. And then he declared that he would go to

Siberia and learn the truth, if it could be learned."

There was a moment's silence before Saville said slowly, "It was like him. And it proves that he had found the passion able to move, to stir, to raise a man to the height of sacrifice—for you know that he loved you!"

"Because I knew it," she replied, "there seemed, as I have said, nothing to do but to let him go."

"It was," the man could not forbear telling her a little bitterly, "a heavy penalty to pay for the offense of loving you."

Her wide, tragic eyes held his for an instant before she said, "I don't know that it is worth while to explain—anything. Of course you have no right to judge me——"

"None," he agreed hastily. "You must pardon——"

A quick movement of her hand stopped the words on his lips. "Never mind apologizing," she said. "There are times when souls are unveiled and conventionalities of speech may be flung aside. This is one of those times for you and me. You loved him——"

"And I love you," he said abruptly.

"I have known that, too," she told him quietly. "A woman always knows these things, even if they have no power to move her. And neither you nor any other man has had power to move me since the great tragedy of my life, until—he came."

Saville started. "You mean Langford?" he asked. "You—cared for him?"

"From the first moment that we met in your studio," she said, "I suppose I—cared for him. At least I was conscious of a sympathy, an attraction such as I had never known before. And as I met him often, knew him better, my heart seemed waking from its long stupor to life and love once more, when—the message from Ladislav came."

"Ah! And then——?"

"Then," she went on, "I knew that there was nothing for me but the old dead existence, and I tried—to stifle feeling. But when he spoke to me I

understood that the effort was beyond my strength, and that I must send him away. So when he said that he would go to Siberia and learn the truth I—though I realized the danger—I let him go. You see it was a chance—the only chance—of life or death—for me, too!"

"I see." Saville said to himself that what he saw was a depth of passion and anguish such as never in all his life had been revealed to him before. "But"—he could not restrain the question—"you told him before he went?"

"No," she cried sharply—and again, "my God, no! Do you think I would tell a man that I loved him while there was even a doubt that my husband lived—I, a Polish woman and a Catholic!"

"And so he had not even that comfort in dying for you!" Saville said.

"No, he had not that comfort," she said, "nor I the memory of having given, in return for such devotion, anything but pain and—death!"

Then the man who had wounded her felt that he must utter at least one word of consolation.

"If he were here at this moment," he said, "he would tell you that you had given him much more than pain and death. You gave him first the knowledge of yourself—no little thing that, in a world full of women of a different kind—you gave him then the knowledge of himself in the strong passion for which he yearned, and you gave him lastly the chance to forget himself in the supreme sacrifice of a heroic death. Does not even the happiness you and he have missed seem small beside these things?"

She could not speak, but she held out her hand to him, and as he kissed it motioned him away. His last sight of her was of the golden head lying on her outstretched arms, while great sobs rent, or perhaps relieved, her heart.

When he stood again outside the door Saville paused and lifted his hat to the memory of the man who, having found what he wanted, had unhesitatingly paid the price.

RECOGNITION

(To B. S.)

By John G. Neihardt

WHAT far-hurled cry is this—what subtle shout
That drives the Winter of my spirit out
With trumpets and the cymbaled joy of Spring?
No more am I the shivering beggared thing
That dreamed of Summer in a bed of snow.
Hark how the kingly trumpets madly blow
A glad, delirious riot of sweet sound!

O, I have found
At last the soul I lost so long ago
In Thessaly where Peneus' waters flow!
For thou wert Lais, and of old 'twas thus
That thou didst speak to me, Hippolochus!
And I have not forgot.

Still dreaming of the old impassioned spot,
I passed through many pangful births in Time,
Weaving in many tongues the aching rhyme
That groped about and cried for thee in vain.
Of many deaths I passed the gates of pain
And down to many hells the bitter ways
I trod, still searching for the ancient days.
Through many lands in many women's eyes
I longed to overtake thee with surprise.
O, the long ages I have sought for thee!

Hast thou kept pure the ancient drink for me?
Who touched with careless lips my goblet's brim,
Daring to dream the vintage was for him?
Half jealous of those lips of dust am I!

O, let us journey back to Thessaly
And from faint echoes build the olden song!
Hast thou forgotten through these ages long
The tinkle of the sheep-bells and the shrill
Glad oaten reeds of shepherds on the hill?
Our days of sultry passion, and the nights
That flashed the dizzy lightning of delights?

At last I feel again thy finger-tips!
Be as a purple grape upon my lips
Made sweet with dew of dreams and wholly mine!
O, let me drink the sweet forbidden wine
Crushed out with bruising kisses!

Death is near,
And I shall lose thee once again, my dear!
The dust of ages chokes me! Quick! the wine!
Lift up the goblet of thy lips to mine!
The bony Terror! Hark, his muffled drums!
Let us be drunken when the Victor comes!

THE AMATEUR HOUSE-PARTY

By Inez Haynes Gillmore

WHEN I read Cousin Elizabeth's letter I nearly died of shock. Here's the letter—I always keep it as one of the documents in the case. It's absolutely perfect as a thumb-nail sketch of Cousin Elizabeth herself who, since she married Oswald Ordway and walked into the Ordway millions, takes herself pretty seriously as a society personage. Mind you, I hadn't heard a word from Cousin Elizabeth since I married Mike and she sent me a repoussé silver game set for a wedding present. Game! All the game we saw for two years was hanging in the dining-rooms of Mike's Weehawken relatives. The set is even now still in the safety-vault the color of Britannia—thank you—where we dumped it the day we got home from our wedding trip.

MY DEAR ELEANOR:

Oswald's physician has just told me that his condition is very serious indeed. (This is the first time I ever knew that Oswald had a condition, but that's just like Cousin Elizabeth—she's absolutely convinced that all her relatives sit with their noses glued to the social-gossip columns, studying out her downittings and uprisings.) He says that Oswald simply must go into the woods somewhere and live a perfectly simple, natural, primeval life for three or four weeks. We've made up our minds to go to one of those delightful camps in the Adirondacks. (I know the kind—brass beds, steam heat and French chefs, but they won't substitute electricity for gas there because that would make it too civilized.) I'm going to do the cooking. (*She* do the cooking!—"just boil ten minutes and serve," is her idea.) Now I'm awfully worried about the last week in August, for we have invited the Alford, mother, father, the twin boys, Tom and Jerry, and their daughter, Shirley Alford, to spend that week on Finvarra Heights. I hate to disappoint them, for it appears that Mr. Alford was brought up in the vicinity

of Brierly-on-the-Hudson and he is simply dying to get back there again and hunt up the haunts of his childhood. Now, Mrs. Alford is a perfectly charming woman, but absolutely unable to run a household. Shirley has done that for her ever since she was twelve, but Shirley refuses to tie herself down this Summer—she's awfully interested in that college settlement on the East Side. (Yes, the one where all those native-born foreign girls marry millionaire boy-philanthropists.) There's no hotel in Brierly-on-the-Hudson and so I can't ask them to go there. Now, what I'm getting at is, will you and Michele (she always calls my husband Michele—although Mike has assured her again and again that he isn't a Guinea—only a Mick) come down and run the house for a week? I thought Michele could get his vacation then as well as any time, and of course I would be delighted to have you invite as many of your interesting friends as you would care to have come. Please, please do, Eleanor! The Alford's are very influential socially, and I can't tell you how much depends on our keeping on the right side of them. I really can't take "no" for an answer.

Yours anxiously,

ELIZABETH HOUGHTON ORDWAY.

Well, I never said a word about this to Mike, but I waited until the gang came, and then I read the letter aloud to them. And before they got their breath back I invited them down in a bunch for a week at Finvarra. Well, we are bohemians, you know. Of course I know there are bohemians and bohemians, but I want you to understand that our gang wasn't of the tin-plate order at all—they were the real thing. They were all geniuses—and young, poor, unappreciated, unsuccessful, sulphitic—I don't know what more you want of a bohemian. Then they loved art for art's sake. They had a soul above gain—and all lived on and off one another in the most deliciously

haphazard, fraternal way. They read one another's poetry and criticized one another's pictures. They fell in and out of love with a rapidity that made Mike and me fairly breathless, and we'd seen every one of them through I don't know how many cases of *bona fide*, hopeless broken heart. But what's the use of generalizing? The best way to tell you about them is to describe the people themselves.

First, there were Mike and me. Mike is a rising young physician, and I am the envied mother of Jane Elizabeth. Then there was Meta Mallory.

Now, Meta was the daughter of an artist, and—I wonder if it was prenatal influences—the most artistic-looking thing you ever saw—just like a Burne-Jones or a Rossetti or a Watts or any one of those artists whose people, Lady Blessington said, looked as if they were going to be hanged, or had just been hanged, or ought to be hanged. Her hair never looked as if it had been combed and it was just full of queer little glinty lights and soft, mysterious shadows, and her complexion actually had a perspective to it. She was all blue shadows and long sinuous lines and curves—you'd know she'd studied Delsarte just to see her put a collar-button into a shirt-waist. She had a kind of wistful, soul-saturated expression, too. Mike said she looked hungry to him, and considering she was brought up in a studio-life that was subject to all kinds of ups and downs, she had the most gorgeous profile. That artist colony at Merrivale said it was the most beautiful profile that ever came into the place, and I guess it was, for it certainly made a Greek coin look like a Grand Army button. In fact, Meta's profile was an awful handicap, for she was always vaguely conscious of it, and, instinctively, living up to it. She always met people sort of sideways when she was introduced, and at functions she always sat with the best half of her face—Yeats-Allingham said that that right side was so perfect that it made him ache—turned toward the people whom she wanted to impress.

I said we were all poor, but that wasn't quite true. Meta had just had a fortune left to her. But she kept right on being a bohemian just the same, which I think was pretty handsome of her.

Then there was Lotte McGaw. Lotte was the editor of a young and thrashingly enterprising magazine. She was the youngest editor in New York. My, but that girl had a head for business! Smart as a whip and bright as a dollar doesn't do her justice. She was good-looking, too, but very different from Meta. Artists never raved about Lotte, but if you got a crowd of college men in the same room with her for an evening, unless the hostess intervened, Lotte never emerged from the heap until the dawn began to come in the windows. She had the jolliest, velvety high-colored skin—Mike said that he was sure Lotte would taste like a Baldwin apple—and the prettiest little red-and-white smile and two hide-and-seek dimples that were just Scylla and Charybdis, Mike said, when he didn't call them hell and damnation.

Then there was Percival Hereford—wouldn't you know that he was a high-brow with that name?—who wrote plays. Nobody produced them, of course. Some day, before I die, I hope I may get as far as knowing somebody who knew somebody who heard distantly of somebody who got a play produced. Still, Percival's plays were pretty good, we all thought; at least we listened to them as fast as Percy—we had to call him Percy because he was a great, hulking whale of a man with a chin so strong that it looked as if it could cut through adamant—wrote them, which was once a week, with unfailing regularity. I say we all liked them—all except Walter Mann, who was an actor and the other member of the gang, and so beautiful that it was enough to make the tears come to a woman's eyes to see so much ammunition wasted on a man—yes, hair, eyes, complexion—he had the whole superwomaning outfit. And Walter was always telling Percy—a statement that was followed by an argument good for

at least a dozen pipefuls—that he couldn't write a play any more than a cow could.

Well, when I read that letter to the gang they burst into a shout of laughter. That waked the baby up, who made a try for the welkin and got away with it. For a moment it was pandemonium—plus Coney Island on a busy Sunday—in our little nest. Then to my horror and with elaborate formality they all accepted my invitation. What's more, we began to talk the proposition over—coolly, calmly and in sober earnest. Everybody was for it—even Mike. First we discussed the Alford.

Of course, everybody knows who the Alford are—so disgustingly rich that old man Alford is always handing out great bunches of money to this college or that and getting it back checked "tainted." He never had a decent dollar in his jeans, so far as I can make out. If that wasn't enough, there's the daughter Shirley, who's a socialist and lives half the time down on the East Side over a little shop with a window filled with a ton of fly-specked kosher bread in one corner and a barrel of diseased kosher pickles in the other. They're so everlastingly afraid that she'll go in for anarchy and blow up the President that they can't sleep nights. But she's nothing to the two boys, Tom and Jerry.

Tom has tried to marry nearly every chorus-girl on the American stage and succeeded twice, but fortunately one of them proved to have another husband in Syracuse and the other divorced him in two months to marry his chauffeur. They're always getting a wire from Jerry that, now at last, he's met the only girl who will ever make him happy, and poor old Pa Alford has to go down in his stocking to endow another chorus-girl. (This money has never come back tagged "tainted.") But Tom, bad as he is, is nothing to Jerry, his twin. Jerry is always coming down with virulent attacks of altruism and announcing that he's going into the ministry. They're always surrounding him with the flesh-pots to

get his mind off his soul, but I think they'd do wiser to let him sow his wild oats and be done with it.

Well, the gang said if we were going to do a house-party, we were going to do it the way it ought to be done—in swell British style—and the best way to find out what the latest and most swagger British style is was simply to read "Dodo" Benson, Robert Hichens and Elinor Glyn and all the rest of the house-party school of novelists, and just take notes.

Well, there's no use in going into it all, but the result, in a nutshell, was that first, right there in the aiding and abetting presence of the gang, I accepted Cousin Elizabeth's offer, and then we began picking out our parts and hunting round to collect the clothes that would suit them.

Meta said she was going as a smart society woman. She had worn artistic colors and floating draperies all her life to suit her friends and her environment and the exigencies of her profile. Now she was going to take a vacation and dress like any other normal, decent woman to suit herself. In the week that followed she went through the shopping district like a ferret, and if anything in the way of dress-goods got by her it was only because the clerk was temporarily deranged.

Lotte decided to go as the frilly girl who stays in bed until afternoon and then gets up for tea, about five, in a smashing tea-gown, who lies in the hammock and reads "Gyp" in the original with one hand, languidly smoking a cigarette or eating *marrons glacés* with the other.

She took two days off and rounded up all her rich relatives in Brooklyn. Lotte is awfully well-connected, you know—although their branch of the family is poor enough—and came back with a trunkful of gowns and petti-skirts that made a buyer fresh from Paris look like a marked-down sale, a collection of silk stockings that temporarily put the aurora borealis out of commission and a cigarette-case that she borrowed from her cousin, Lila McGaw—yes, the one that married

that bankrupt French count—with her initials L. M. on it in diamonds.

Walter Mann said he'd go simply as a gentleman. There was nothing else for him to do and, fortunately, he'd always acted in those high-class English plays that make you sick and cynical for a week, and he had the most startling array of English clothes I ever saw. Loud? Well, I should say so! He couldn't come into the same room with our sleeping babe in any one of them.

Percival Hereford said he couldn't go as a gentleman because his two suits were too much on the blink—at least he'd have to be an awfully high-class gentleman to carry such a thing off, and he didn't quite dare attempt it. He was afraid he couldn't be rude and eccentric enough. Walter Mann said quite enviously that it was the "fat" part and he wished he could see him (Walter) in it. For a while we were quite in despair about poor Percy. Then a wonderful idea came to him—to go as Walter's valet. He was writing a play, it appears, in which there was a servants' ball, and he wanted to know what butlers and footmen and stable-boys talked about.

I was going, of course, as a fashionable young mother—it made me sick, though, to think of neglecting the baby—but I knew that I owed it to her—she'd never get such another chance and I'd do it if it killed me.

Well, we all arrived at Finvarra Heights at Brierly-on-the-Hudson promptly, as per schedule, on Monday morning, the second of August, with so much baggage—I mean luggage; with so many trunks—I mean boxes; guns, fishing-rods, tennis-racquets, golf-sticks, that I was ashamed to look the stationmaster in the face. In fact, I guess we overdid it, for I heard one of the servants say to another: "Say, they forgot to bring the tent."

The house was simply magnificent. It made the Waldorf-Astoria look like a beer-garden—it was simply encrusted with turrets, towers, balconies, piazzas, cupolas, rotundas, minarets, bay-windows, bow-windows, sun-parlors and

every other architectural excrescence that an idle woman just breaking into society could think of. Inside there were elevators—I mean lifts—drawing-rooms and libraries, full of lovely clean, uncut books galore, each furnished in a different period, a dance-hall, billiard-room, a gun-room and a swimming-tank. There were suites of rooms for us to inhabit such time as we desired privacy. Privacy! You'd have had to chain any one of us down in the next week. Outside, the gardens and lawns just covered the whole visible face of nature. And there were stables full of motors and blooded horses, hothouses, golf courses, tennis courts and yachts and motor-boats in the boathouse.

It was pretty awkward at first living up to the servants, but we were all quick-witted and guessed in an instant what they expected of us, and did it with neatness and despatch. Walter, for instance, drank Scotch all the time we were there, though he loathes it, and Mike was always calling for a "peg."

Lotte, according to the demands of her part, went right to bed the moment we arrived, although I knew she was simply dying of curiosity to see how the rest of us would play up. Meta put herself into the hands of a delicious little French maid who made such ducks and drakes of the English language that Meta kept asking for things she didn't want in order to keep her going. Percival disappeared in the direction of the servants' quarters, and Walter calmly got into immaculate riding togs and went off on the best horse in the stable. While they were away the Alford's came.

Mrs. Alford and Shirley were correct and distinguished in their nice, simple traveling-clothes. Mr. Alford, fat-faced and beery, with the most innocent, confiding, good-natured blue eyes I ever saw, looked as if he would take Chinese money as fast as you handed it out to him. They came just as tea was being served, and Mrs. Alford sank into a chair and drank three cups without winking.

In the midst of this Meta, very lovely in a blue radium silk, came down

the stairs, followed, a little later, by Lotte in a frilly, fluffy, frivolous, oyster-white, chiffony thing with a long tail to it. Close upon her Mike sauntered in, very immaculate in his afternoon things, and Walter at his heels. Walter was my pride and joy. He just waited for introductions and then, laughingly insisting that he must get out of his riding togs, he vanished, to reappear in a little while, the glass of fashion and the mold of form. It was almost too perfect.

Well, maybe that wasn't a week. Our gang played the game to perfection. Cousin Elizabeth was not in the habit of serving a buffet breakfast, but I made myself solid with the English butler by—with a perfectly scandalized face—insisting upon it. People would come straggling down from their bedrooms, anywhere about eleven, giving a fair imitation of a yawn, breakfast lightly, and then separate for the sports of the day. Luncheon would see perhaps more of them. But it was not until five, when Lotte appeared to ornament a hammock in still another ravishing confection, that the clans really gathered. Lotte was a dream—French novel, jeweled cigarette-case, *marrons glacés*—they were always there. Of course by this time Jerry Alford—that's the high-minded, noble twin—was her slave, but she was perfect in her oh-you-nice-boy attitude toward him. Meta, of course, was overrun with Tom—that's the chorus-girl twin.

You should have seen Meta! An artist would have thrown a dozen fits at the sight of her. She looked like the heroine of a Maeterlinck drama turned Gibson girl—hair marceled in undeviating rows that you couldn't have broken with an eighteen-inch shell—manicured, massaged, osteopathed, corseted actually, perfumed and very delicately and unnecessarily made-up—and in clothes that would have made her father turn in his grave—untuned pinks and blues that would carry a mile through a fog, tailor suits, sequined evening gowns, smart suits for sailing, immaculate shirt-waist suits for golf—oh, you'd have died. There was noth-

ing left of her but her profile, and she even forgot that for long stretches at a time.

But the Alfords—they were the fly in my amber. In the first place, Mr. Alford walked, ate and *slept*, I'm sure, in an old shiny frock-coat of which it is a charitable euphemism to say merely that it was spotted like a pard; and an old bunged-up straw hat that looked as if it might have been bought from the gipsies and actually had been run over by an automobile. The papers say that he is worth fifty millions, but I knew it was a hundred the moment I saw his clothes.

Mrs. Alford, a soft, fat thing, architected in terraces, wore a series of white nighties, cut low in the neck to avoid the erosion of her combination of double chins. Beautiful materials they were and hand-embroidered and all that, but—honest—I used to feel queer about the boys seeing her about, all the time, in those glorified Mother Hubbards. She always wore a string of pearls as big as marbles—the kind that you don't believe. And her fingers were so crowded with diamonds that she never could do anything with her hands at all—Mike said he was sure she wrote letters with her feet. But she was a lovely, motherly old soul who gave me a lot of good advice and stole my baby every moment she was awake. And, my eye! how Jane Elizabeth would jump up and down on my lap when she'd see her coming.

Shirley Alford appeared now and then out from town, always in a plain but perfectly stunning tailor-suit. Our men didn't pay much attention to her—they said she was too cold. But I could see that, under that cold, unresponsive exterior, she really was a beauty if she would only give the woman in her a chance. She got acquainted with all the servants immediately, and Percival, as an example of an aspiring and ambitious valet, attracted her attention at once. She was always whizzing in or whirling out from New York at unexpected times, and Percival, who was making the best valet of modern times and

had grown to know how to work an automobile more easily than a rat-trap, always acted as her chauffeur.

Everything went all right and I knew that nobody in the house—not even the servants—suspected that we weren't the real thing, until Saturday came. And then something happened.

We were all sitting out in the Italian garden, and Horrocks was just about to serve tea when Mike came walking up a path with a strange woman on one side and a strange man on the other. I stared and then arose, wondering what had happened. It didn't seem to me that any unexpected guests of Cousin Elizabeth's could have arrived; I didn't know what to think.

"Eleanor," Mike said directly, "let me introduce Miss MacGregor and Mr. Innes-Buxton to you. Their automobile has just broken down outside our gate, and I insisted that they come in and rest before they went on."

Of course I welcomed them both. They threw back their goggles and—well, she was a wonder. They were both English—you would know that the moment they opened their mouths. They had that cool, clean-cut English accent, spread so thick over every word that you couldn't have dispersed it with an electric battery. He was a big, jolly, tubbed-looking florid Englishman, the kind that American women always like. But she—my word!—peaches and cream, milk and roses, moonshine and honey! She looked as if she'd walked out of an English beauty-book—a huge, statuesque golden-blond. You pitied her for being born in England, for you could see by her clothes that she was middle-class, whereas if she'd only been born in America she could have become an English duchess so easily. For that's what she ought to have been—you could just see how stately she'd be in the long train and the three feathers of a presentation-gown, and her brow seemed actually molded to fit a coronet.

I was proud enough of our crowd. Lotte, lolling lazily in the hammock, was just one billowy mass of sea-green

chiffon and foaming white pettiskirts. Meta wore lavender, trimmed with Irish crochet, and foxy little motifs of Chinese embroidery at just the right spots—and little wassets and dingle-dangles of black velvet with brilliant buckles everywhere—so chic that it positively made you dizzy. Her hair looked as if it had been turned out of a mold—like jelly. Mike and Walter in their white flannels were the most languidly-lovely things ever.

Pretty soon in came Horrocks, wheeling the tea-table—just one winking mass of old silver, old glass and old Sheffield plate—and, as I poured, he served things in his inimitable, straight, face-like-a-ramrod way. The Alfords came in from driving and, for a wonder, both had clothes on that you could look at without a blush. Of course the twins were always very smart. Shirley Alford wasn't there, and I was glad for I was afraid she would be cold and supercilious.

Well, we all acted up to the Britishers—for weren't we doing an English house-party?—and you should have heard our conversation. Walter discoursed of plays and playwrights—Ibsen, Sudermann, Hauptmann, Maeterlinck, Rostand, Pinero, Jones, as if he'd seen them all produced in their native wilds. Meta contributed studio slang and personal-item talk of Rodin, Whistler and Sargent as if she'd sat for every one of them. Lotte piped up with references to all the latest English novelists and poets. Mike spoke casually of all the most recent surgical and medical experiments for tuberculosis—he even went a little way, far enough to lose me, at any rate—into fourth dimension. I repeated all Shirley Alford's socialist and sociological stuff. And the Alfords—when we let them interrupt—finding the strangers were globe-trotters, referred to every corner of the civilized and uncivilized globe into which their record-breaker yacht, the *Wraith*, had put in. They talked and talked and stayed and stayed—even I was surprised. And when finally they did go they had to pull themselves away—that was visible to the

naked eye. We hated to see them go, of course, but we didn't urge them to stay. We knew that would be ill-bred. And of course nothing was said about our ever meeting again—that would have been fierce manners.

Well, they had hardly left when Shirley Alford came trailing in—all stringy and taggy and dusty from a record auto trip out from town.

"How'd Lady Penelope happen to call?" she asked at once.

"Lady Who?" we shouted.

"Why, Lady Penelope—I saw her and her brother Bertie turn out of the drive as we came along. We had a punctured tire and couldn't catch them."

"Lady Penelope!" I gasped. "She said her name was MacGregor."

"So it is—Lady Penelope MacGregor, and her brother's the Duke of Innes-Buxton. She's traveling incognito through the United States," Shirley explained easily, "making sociological investigations, you know. I must find out where she is—she and I were great pals in London last season."

Lady Penelope MacGregor! The Duke of Innes-Buxton! I did not dare to look up, for my cheeks were burning. My English house-party! She stayed so long, of course, because she was so amused. And how we must have entertained her! Late that night the gang met and went into executive session. The burden of our universal plaint was, "*What do you suppose she really thought of us?*"

But we heard what she thought of us curiously enough. Ten days later, after we were all back again in town comfortably being bohemians again, and luxuriating in our old clothes, a letter came from Shirley Alford an-

nouncing her engagement to Percival. In it she enclosed a letter from Lady Penelope that she said had been chasing her all over the country. The part that concerned us was this. I read it to the awe-stricken gang:

"MY DEAR:

"I can't tell how wonderful a country this of yours is—what a wonderful country and what wonderful people. It is, in my opinion, by way of developing the most perfect civilization the world has ever seen. I don't judge entirely by the people whom I meet through my letters, for they are like everybody, the people one meets everywhere. Nor have I made up my mind because of the evidence submitted by the extraordinary vigorous schedule of investigation to which my American friends have submitted me. It is by the accidental, the by-the-way, the haphazard experiences that I have come, after mature thought, pray believe me, to this interesting conviction.

"Ten days ago, for instance, Bertie's auto broke down in a place called Brierly-on-the-Hudson. Some people were kind enough to take us in—a magnificent house, frightfully new of course—forgive me, my dear, but there are some angles of what you call my British insularity that will never wear down. But the people there, though young, were far from 'new.' They belonged to that high caste that is born ancient as ancient. Such conversation—not talk or chatter—but genuine conversation as Bertie and I listened to, enraptured. I could scarcely tear myself away. I assure you it put a girdle round the earth.

"Here was the week-end party such as, all through my girlhood, I dreamed of finding in England—the ideal gathering of choice spirits that the lying novelists picture again and again in their pages. Young people, alive, alert, beautifully mannered and clothed, exquisitely hospitable, frank and free, yet full of all the right reticences and reserves—a suave, gracious atmosphere. Art, poetry, music, the drama, science, travel—they were specialists in every direction and yet of such a naiveté—so ready for the new experience—so *en rapport* with the new thought. I have just finished writing mama a detailed account of it, and I am making it the theme of a chapter in my new book, 'Americans at Home.'"



THE best of girls is she who can remember only the pleasant things and forget—what you want her to.

LOUIS D'OR

By Emma Wolf

WHO knows?
Pierre Larou, puffing at his evening cigar, peered into the moonlit woods with a thrill of expectancy. Had someone spoken?

But the warm, fragrance-breathing woods were silent. The moon rose slowly, mysteriously, behind the dusky red madrone. There came no answer.

Yet tomorrow Marie Louise would be eighteen years old.

Again Pierre turned his head as though someone had called.

Imbécile! he shrugged sheepishly over the vagary. Because tomorrow Marie Louise would have reached her eighteenth year, her so-called woman's estate, was that any reason why the long silence should be broken? Pierre shook his head in slow resignation while reminiscence filled his gaze.

It was on just such a warm June night, eighteen years ago, that he had reached his vineyard home, here on the Santa Cruz height, and discerning Madeleine's figure on the small veranda, had made straight for her and deposited his burden in her astonished arms.

"What is it?" she had asked, frightened. But her sense of touch had already informed her.

"It is your *bébé*, Madeleine."

"Are you crazy, Pierre Larou?"

"No, Madeleine, I am not crazy. It is your *bébé*—the *bébé* that never came."

"You *are* crazy! Whose child is this?"

"It is Maria Carvelho's child."

"That shameless creature! What do you mean? How do you know? Where has she been all these years? Where did you get this?"

"In the hospital at San José. That is where I drove this morning—not to Los Gatos, as I told you. Her—Maria Carvelho's—father would not see her. So she sent for me—her father's best friend."

The child in Madeleine's arms had stirred.

"And—Maria?"

"She is dead."

"And the father?"

"Carvelho?"

"No. The father of—this. Who is he?"

"Who knows?"

Pierre had gazed then as blankly into the question of the woman's eyes as now, after eighteen years, he vainly sought answer from the silent woods.

Things had prospered with the Frenchman during that time. Visitors from the charming Summer resort in the valley below had praised and advertised his wine, had enthused over his cherries—but more than all had they wondered over the beauty of his "young daughter."

For only to one, in a moment of emotional confidence, had he told what he knew of her origin, and he——

Aha!

The leaves carpeting the mountain path crackled drily, the white gate separating the vineyard home from the woodland trail clicked sharply; a song hummed a trifle falsetto, a trifle uncertainly, came haltingly upon the still evening air:

"Au clair de la lu-ne,
Mon ami Pierrot!
Prête-moi ta plu-me
Pour écrire un mot.
Ma chandelle est morte,
Je n'ai plus de——"

Pierre's very ears seemed to rise to

a whimsical smile as he dropped his cigar and directed his leisurely stride toward the sound.

The rising moon faintly illumined the approaching figure—a man of medium height, of medium rotundity, clad in khaki trousers and blue flannel shirt; a battered straw hat rested on the back of his head. He walked with a suspiciously wide uncertainty.

Pierre approached him gaily. "As usual, Louis d'Or!" he cried, clapping him upon the shoulder.

The man halted, regarded him musingly, drew himself up in grave dignity, and made a low satirical bow.

"As usual, Pierre Larou." His voice, despite its slight hiccup, was singularly musical.

"You are drunk, Louis d'Or."

The man again bowed gravely. "I said, 'As usual.' And you—you are *banal*—as usual, Pierre Larou." His gaze was now aggrieved, reproachful.

Pierre laughed good-naturedly. "Come into the arbor," he said, and Louis d'Or, in sad graciousness, took his arm. They zigzagged forward, stumbled over a tree-root, righted themselves, and finally polkaed into Pierre's splendid natural arbor, formed of two old, wide-spreading, low-drooping fig-trees.

Louis d'Or dropped into a half-reclining attitude upon one of the long rustic benches, his head propped by his arm; Pierre stretched himself in the gnarled arm-chair near the entrance. The moon peered in at them through the leaves, lighting poignantly the highly-colored face of the man on the bench. The wide-set eyes above the high, fine nose were closed. Suddenly they opened, looking out, gray and impudent, from their heavy setting.

Louis d'Or smiled. Whether it was the even set of the still handsome teeth, or the slight tilt of the head to the side which gave him his air of rakish mockery, Pierre did not know, but it tickled him to the marrow.

"It must be six months since we met," Pierre remarked anticipatively.

"Six months!" mused Louis d'Or. "A long time between drinks, *mon ami*

—a long time since you gave me the bottle around the corner of the Los Gatos station. It lasted—ah, it lasted till the last drop——"

"And since then?"

"I have been subsisting—on the milk of human kindness. *Hélas!*" He spoke dreamily with a marked French noting and rhythm.

"You have exhausted the supply?"

"Never! If you but know to touch the right button, it is always on tap."

"But?"

"But—it sometimes curdles—in my legs!"

"In your legs!"

"A twinge of conscience, or—perhaps of rheumatism. *N'importe!* Moral or physical, it is painful."

"That, my friend, comes of sleeping in the open instead of in a bed like a good Christian. Why can't you——?"

"Monsieur, I am not good, and I am no Christian. I am a free man. Also, I am most domesticated—I am always at home on my glorious estates with 'the birds, my sisters, and the winds, my brothers.'" He spoke liltingly.

"You are past fifty. It will end by killing you."

"All life does that. It is only a question of compensation—the more you live, the more you leave. Meanwhile I live—as I will. A little editorial for the editor, a little speech for the mayor, a little wood chopped for the good wife, a little play-acting for the sentimentalists, a little conversation for the Tomlinsons, like Judge Graham and you——"

"Tomlinsons?"

"See Kipling. It's all in the day's tramp, my Pierrot. And—*en passant*—I live." He crossed his legs conclusively, his dusty, tattered shoes seeming to wink up at him with comprehension.

"*Bien*, Louis d'Or. But there always comes a day of reckoning, if not before, at least at the Resurrection."

"Ha-ha! The Resurrection! Ah, my poor mother!" He sat up, clapping his hands in ecstasy to his knees. All shadow of morality had fled from his countenance—it was a grin like

a satyr's; his body shook in a tumult of wild mirth.

"*Dis-donc*, Pierrot, I have never told you that story?"

"Never, never." Pierre leaned forward in grinning eagerness. The impish gleams about Louis d'Or's mouth and eyes promised entertainment.

"You know Gaston and Etienne?"

"Your two comrades?"

"And *la petite* Chou-chou, and Ninon, and Lisette?"

"Lisette was yours."

"A child of the sun, Pierrot, a flower. *Eh bien*, things were very, very bad. My muse had forsaken me, Gaston could not sell his picture, Etienne had no clients. We had eaten our clothes, our bedding, our books. It is true we still possessed a cloak of decency apiece, but the wind of destiny was about to tear even that away. Chou-chou declared she would turn cannibal. Ninon wept. But Lisette looked at me without a word.

"We can only die," despaired Gaston. At that moment my errant muse peeped over my shoulder. I arose. 'Not you,' I announced sublimely. 'I—I—alone shall die that you all may live.' Lisette ran sobbing to me. 'Oh, *mon bien-aimé*,' she wept, 'what are you about to do?' '*Chérie*,' I said, putting her gently aside, 'it is no use. At this moment I see death staring me in the face.' 'Louis!' she shrieked and the others rushed at me. '*Mesdames et messieurs*,' I said, restraining them with commanding mien, 'it is too late to protest. I am dying. In fact, my beloved comrades, I am already dead!' And slowly before their dumfounded gaze, I sank to the floor. They caught me as I fell. 'Telegraph my mother,' I whispered faintly, 'telegraph my poor, poor mother—for the funeral expenses.' They understood. A shout of triumph went up. They laid me out in state upon the floor. Gaston wrapped his cloak grandly about him and sallied forth, a song on his lips and Lisette's little shoes in his hand—to pay for the telegraph to my mother. She lived at Varennes. By morning she had wired us the money.

By night we had redeemed our belongings, our appetites, our smiles, our joy of living. By midnight, when the delirium was at its height, just as Ninon had sprung upon the table, glass in hand, ready for her song, there came a tremendous knocking at the door. 'Who is there?' cried Etienne loudly. 'It is I—Marguerite d'Or,' cried a woman's unsteady voice. 'Let me in. I have come to the funeral of my son.' Gaston sprang forward, threw wide the door, and chivalrously bowed in a crêpe-shrouded figure. She gazed, trembling, upon the scene. It was a time for action, not for tears. I sprang up beside Ninon, glass high in hand. 'Maman,' I cried triumphantly, 'rejoice with me. I was not dead—but starving!' and I fell forward from the table, glass and all, into her agitated arms. You see, my Pierrot, I have already enjoyed my resurrection."

"Ah, *mon Dieu*!" rebuked Pierre, drying his sympathetic eyes, "you were heartless—sinful."

"No, my good Tomlinson, only a little drunk, a little young—in short, a little pagan. *C'est tout*, my poor Tomlinson."

"Tomlinson? Who is this Tomlinson?"

"A conceit, *mon ami*. Tomlinson was a man who enjoyed life—what is called sin—vicariously. In short, a damn fool, my Pierrot."

"You are abominable. If Marie Louise—"

"Ah! Pardon." The sudden change was startling. The man was sitting up, hat in hand—sober, all satire vanished from his waiting face.

Pierre had witnessed such unexpected psychologic shiftings before. But he was curious tonight.

"Pardon?" he echoed in question. "What for? Why do you take off your hat?"

"I had forgotten," returned Louis d'Or softly, gazing upward through the foliage. "The moon is a woman."

Pierre ignored the characteristic vagary. "Tomorrow is her fête-day," he murmured, with a smile.

"I know. That is why I am here."

"I know."

A leaf fluttered down to Louis d'Or's feet.

"She is well—*la petite*—and madame?" He spoke as though a sleeping child lay near.

"Ah, Louis d'Or, tomorrow you shall see. But she is beautiful—beautiful! Hemmingway, the artist, cannot take his eyes from her. He comes up here almost every day to hear her read French—she has a charming voice and accent—but, really, I think it is to look at the child."

"Hemmingway? Lawrence Hemmingway?"

"Yes—the Englishman who paints such wonderful pictures of our Monterey. He has been stopping at the hotel below for several weeks now. But he likes the greater altitude up here—and my cherries—and my wine—and Marie Louise's French. A charming man. You should meet him."

"I have met him—on the beach at old Monterey. He has good taste—Hemmingway; he invited me into his studio."

Pierre Larou's eyes gleamed delightedly. It was a pleasure to have his joy in this picturesque vagabond endorsed by such insight as Hemmingway's.

"So he comes here—almost every day—to hear mademoiselle read French," mused Louis d'Or aloud. "And his wife?"

"His wife?"

"Yes. Does she come with him—when he comes—almost every day—to hear mademoiselle read French?"

"But you are mistaken—he has no wife." Pierre was vaguely troubled.

"Lawrence Hemmingway—English artist—tall, slim, short golden beard which he has a trick of stroking with a delicate white hand?"

"Exactly."

"His wife, the daughter of Bullock, the copper king. I saw her, too—and the little boy—in the bungalow at Monterey."

"Strange!"

"Not at all. Only, Pierre Larou,

vous êtes enfant. And you do not know that a man may smile and smile and be a villain—and you have a young girl to guard—and tomorrow she will be a woman—and you tell me she is beautiful—and you do not know her—her forebears—and, Pierre Larou, God will hold you responsible." He spoke quietly, but with his usual emotional intensity. He had always made much of little Marie Louise, but Pierre opened wide his eyes over his incongruous solemnity.

"You to speak of God!" he laughed.

In turn Louis d'Or raised his eyebrow indifferently, likewise his body. Pierre also arose. He knew it was coming—that singular, baffling motion of Louis d'Or's sun-brown aristocratic hand, as of waving an inferior aside. It came—and Pierre's hand almost rose in salute. But, under cover of the night, he blushed, and quickly recovered his common sense as he followed his fantastic guest into the open.

"*Eh bien,*" he suggested lightly, "there is always the little room ready for you, you know."

"Thanks, monsieur," returned the other with whimsical grandeur as they moved along, "but my effects await me in my green boudoir yonder." He waved his hand widely toward the great woods. "But who is that?" They were approaching the white picket gate beside which a leaning figure was plainly discernible.

"That? That must be Marie Louise," returned Pierre, and Louis d'Or's hat was in his hand as they drew near.

"Good evening, Louis d'Or," called the young bell-like voice. "What brought you here?"

"My big toe and a bottle of beer," Louis d'Or sang out, solemnly repeating the words of the childish play she had taught him years before.

Marie Louise laughed delightedly, and Louis d'Or, without offering his hand, came up and leaned vis-à-vis upon the fence beside her.

"Ask him to tell you about Mr. Hemmingway's wife," called Pierre,

August, 1907—7

a yard away. "I am going in to *maman*."

In the pale moonlight Louis d'Or saw the slender figure stiffen, felt, rather than saw, the painful tide crimsoning the purity of her face, and he swore inaudibly behind set teeth.

"Mr. Hemmingway's wife?" she echoed faintly. Then, "What is the joke?"

"There is no joke, *fillette*. I was telling your papa that I met Mrs. Hemmingway and Mr. Hemmingway and their little son in their bungalow at Monterey."

"You are quite mistaken, Louis d'Or."

"Oh, no, *fillette*. I am quite sure. He introduced me to his wife."

"Then, simply, you—you are lying, sir." She spoke in ungirlish quietude, her gray eyes looking straight into his from beneath level dark brows.

Louis d'Or sighed. "As you will, *fillette*," he returned in quiet sadness.

"You are hateful, Louis d'Or," she suddenly stamped in unrestrained passion. "What do I care about your Mr. Hemmingway? Why do you tell it to me as if—as if—? Why do you come here, anyway? What do you want?"

"I came for your *fête*, *fillette*. I want nothing."

She turned her head from him with a half-checked sob of shame.

He waited a moment, then silently opened the gate and, without a word, passed light-footed down the trail. His eyes, too, looked out from under level dark brows, but inscrutably, not in passion.

He swung, sure-footed as a goat, down the winding, wooded steep, crushing carelessly through barring boughs, jumping with scarce a pause the little murmurous brook continually crossing his path, moving always in a bee-line toward the valley. The moon hung high over the trees when he reached the long stretch of buildings basking in mellow light, the gardens and porches dotted with human figures moving about singly or in groups, or sitting two by two upon secluded rustic

benches. A string band, playing a sweetly sentimental air, lent added romance to the scene.

Louis d'Or mounted the short flight of steps and made straight for the brightly lighted bar.

"Hello, Louis," chorused a number of voices as he entered. "Have a drink! What's doing? What'll you have?"

"Thank you, gentlemen," returned the tramp, graciously bowing right and left, moving toward the counter, against which he negligently took his stand. "But I am not drinking tonight."

He took off his almost crownless hat and mopped his wet brow with a surprisingly nice handkerchief.

"Bad for business, Louis," laughed the proprietor, lounging near.

"It is only temporary, my friend," he reassured him with grave dignity. "In twenty-four hours I shall again be gladly at your service. As I had occasion to remark to Judge Graham yesterday, a good drink is 'twice blessed—it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.' Tell me, Mr. Goodwin, is Mr. Hemmingway, the artist, still with you?"

"I left him just now on the east porch."

"Alone?"

"With his cigar. I'll——"

"Thank you. I'll find him."

He bowed to the company at large and passed out and across the porches amid curious glances and several jovial recognitions.

It seemed to him that he had reached the ell called the east porch in a flash of thought, for he found the solitary figure leaning upon the rail as if by appointment.

"Good evening, Mr. Hemmingway."

He came toward him, but stood still a foot away.

The graceful figure raised itself leisurely. "Why," he laughed, taking his cigar from his mouth and extending a hand, "this is good luck. It's my friend, Louis d'Or, isn't it?"

"It's Louis d'Or, all right," returned the other softly, drawing closer. "I have only a moment, Mr. Hemmingway,

in which to inquire after the health of your wife."

"My wife is quite well," returned the artist in astonishment, retreating to the rail.

"Ah! *Bien*. I have just been speaking of her to a little girl upon the mountain. And now, Mr. Hemmingway, kindly permit me to punch your head!"

Lithely, even as he spoke, he was upon him, had seized the blond head between his tense hands, banged it violently against the supporting column and, before the dazed artist could regain his bruised senses, had vaulted the rail with the agility of a cat and sped out of sight without further disturbance.

Down the moonlit trail there floated back the retreating, staccato murmur of a nursery song:

"*Ainsi font, font, font les petites marionnettes,
Ainsi font, font, font les petits marionnets!*"

II

BREAKFAST wafted a delicious aroma from the arbor where, upon the snowy cloth, in and out among the piled-up, crusty rolls, golden butter and honey trailed splendid branches of great, juicy, black cherries, heavy with dew. The morning sun lay languid all about under the warm, blue June haze. Maman Larou, in gray linen, smiled plumply behind the steaming urn; Papa Larou, in clean white shirt sleeves, sat at her right dividing his attention between the road and the face of the young girl opposite, with its dim traces of tears about the lovely eyes. She was dressed, festively, in white; she smiled upon her parents, but she evidently found it difficult to respond to their playful tenderness.

Breakfast waited.

"But it's foolish to be so silent today," cried Madeleine at last, shaking her head reprovingly at the young girl. "It is a day to be glad, and you, who always laugh and sing so much——"

"Be still, Madeleine. Look—here comes our guest! *Dieu*, but he is

charming this morning—shining, shaven and shorn—in his gray Summer suit and straw hat! All in your honor, *fillette*. A prince for one day in the year! Tomorrow he will sell the whole costume and be a tramp again. *Quel farceur!* Ah, here he is."

He stood in the opening, his hat in one hand, a deep red rose in the other, the sun flickering over his silvering temples and casting elfish, leafy shadows upon his life-beaten face, which bore today simply a bright, glad look.

"*Mesdames et monsieur—bonjour!*" He said it with sovereign grace, and Pierre arose, part as host, part in response to that indefinable call of the superior which Louis d'Or's personality so often exercised over him.

"*Bonjour*, Louis d'Or," he cried heartily.

The tramp in disguise bent chivalrously over his hostess's extended hand, then turned to the quiet girl and laid his rose beside her hand as it rested upon the table.

"My felicitations, mademoiselle," he murmured softly.

"Mademoiselle!" cried the voluble Madeleine. "So it has come to that! Well, Louis d'Or, what do you think of a girl who cannot laugh on her eighteenth birthday—heh? Sit down, and I will pour the coffee—and tell me what one shall think of a girl like that."

The blood flowed painfully over Marie Louise's cheek and brow while she laughed shortly at Madeleine's frowning smile.

Louis d'Or turned his eyes away. "But, madame," he protested, taking the cup of steaming fragrance from her, "it is most natural. It is the good-bye to childhood. Did I not feel it—I who speak to you—when I was twenty-one? Madame, on that day young joy committed suicide. But, before it went it passed through the streets of Paris, saying good-bye, with tears in its eyes, to the tender green of the trees, to the guignoles in their booths, to the appetite for the beautiful apple it bought from the apple woman at the corner—ah, madame, it wept over the little mental knicker-

bockers it must never wear again—one is so old—and so young!—when one is twenty-one. In that moment of farewell one ignores the beautiful tomorrow—*mademoiselle*."

He smiled winningly toward her as he broke his roll, and Marie Louise's eyes responded over the rim of her cup, though she seemed to have some trouble in swallowing.

"Oh, la-la," scoffed Madeleine, reaching for the butter. "That is good enough nonsense when there is nothing better, but Marie Louise has something very happy to think of today. Her papa has told her he has promised Mrs. Ware—Mrs. William Ware, of San José, who has taken such a fancy to our little girl—she was charming to Marie Louise all the time she was at the convent—well, her papa has told her she is going to Europe with Mrs. Ware next month to stay one whole year. It is his big birthday surprise to her because she has always been a good little girl."

"Mademoiselle is going to Europe!"

"*Mais oui*, Louis d'Or," laughed the girl, recovering her gaiety in the face of his great excitement.

"And you will see Paris?"

"Mrs. Ware has always said that if I would go with her we should see Paris for six long months."

"Short months, *mademoiselle*. You will take a message for me?"

"Gladly."

"You will go one night to the quartier, rue—no, no, pardon! You will go one morning—noon—night—any time!—to the Boulevards—anywhere—and you will look down at the pavement beneath your feet, and you will say with the still, small voice, 'Louis d'Or sends greetings—greetings—to his beloved.'" His voice went hoarse and low with emotion, the cup he raised to his lips trembled in his hand.

"But, if you love it so, why do you not go back?"

The man looked at her with an unfathomable smile. "*Quien sabe?*" he shrugged irresponsibly. "There are other elements to answer. I, perhaps, have reverted to what my friend, Jack

London, would explain as 'the call of the wild.'" He reached to the cherries and, selecting a pair of two-stemmed beauties, hung them dangling over his ears, shaking his head solemnly at her.

The girl laughed, entering into his harlequin mood, and presently Madeleine arose and began packing the tray, while Pierre reluctantly lifted his pleasure-loving body with a long sigh.

"Well," he said, "it is workday for me and I must get to my orchard. See you later, Louis d'Or? Now I leave you to talk your little *morale* to Marie Louise."

"And I, too," bustled Madeleine. "Here, *mademoiselle*, as Louis d'Or now calls you, let that tray alone. Help me fold the cloth and I will carry it all away. Now, throw it over my arm. So I, too, leave you to talk your little *morale*, as usual, to Marie Louise. If you want to talk business to me later—No? No business today? *Eh bien*, no speeches, Louis d'Or—you are always part of Marie Louise's birthday. *Au revoir*."

She trotted away.

The sun-laden silence was broken by a trilling bird. A leaf fluttered down upon Marie Louise's dark head as she stood gazing out through the branches.

"*Chérie*, I have brought you a little gift."

She turned quickly. She had been somewhat afraid of this customary tête-à-tête, but he had forgotten the "*mademoiselle*" born of the night; he was speaking to the little girl whose wonderful playmate he had been from time to time ever since she was "so high."

"A gift for me! But you have brought me my rose as usual."

"But today is different—today is more, *chérie*. Today you are a woman and I can no longer play with you—so I have brought you a little souvenir." He had removed the silly cherries from his ears, and he now proffered the small package with simple dignity.

She took it, wondering over its dainty wrappings. "Why, it's a

book," she cried, the last sheath of tissue paper revealing a slender white leather volume, its velvety surface unlettered, immaculate as the driven snow.

"I'm afraid to touch it," she exclaimed, putting her hands behind her, her eyes wide with surprise.

"It is for you to touch, Marie Louise."

"It is so white, so pure—like a prayer-book!"

"It is a prayer—book—for you, Marie Louise." He spoke so low—the little white book lay between them like a sacrament. She picked it up diffidently and opened to the fly-leaf. It bore this legend in simple gold lettering:

For a Little Girl upon the Mountain from Louis d'Or.

Her starry eyes widened as she shot one glance toward her vis-à-vis, then she turned the leaves with curious finger.

"It is poetry," she breathed in girlish wonder. "I adore poetry, Louis d'Or."

"I am glad, *chérie*."

Her eyes lay upon the open page, her lips were parted, her color came and went. "Louis d'Or!" Her flooding eyes drew his. They answered in smiling appeal. "Louis d'Or, who wrote—these?"

"It was I, *chérie*."

"But, Louis d'Or, you are a genius!"

"Oh, no, *fillette*."

"But you are!—I know."

"No, you do not know. It is but a phase—a passing phase."

"But—you caught it."

"Through you—for you—once—alone."

"Through me?"

"I thought of you."

"But——"

"I have had my four or five white moments—when I have thought of you. You hold them there in your hand. *C'est tout*. Today, you see, I am only Louis d'Or, the vagabond and tramp."

The welling tears brimmed over to her cheeks. She hid her face in her hands, sobbing, she knew not why.

"But, Louis d'Or, I—I am not fit—not worthy of this great gift. You wrong yourself—it should be for the world."

"*Chérie*, you like—what you have glanced at in the little book?"

"Oh!"

"*Alors*, I have my royalty." He drew himself up with a Cyranoesque gesture, his eyes covering her with light.

Farceur? Was he really a fraud, a play-actor, and nothing more—this mysterious, half-wild creature who had always flashed into her days with such unexpected piquancy? Her eyes traveled questioningly over the baffling, weather-beaten face and figure, and she leaned suddenly toward him.

"Louis d'Or," she murmured hurriedly, "where do you sleep in the Winter?"

"But the country is full of hospitable barns," he cried in surprise. "And you cannot imagine how congenial I am to the dumb animals. Oh, I find comrades everywhere."

"It is so strange—so unnatural," she protested wistfully.

"Not for Louis d'Or. *Eh bien*, you will not forget me?"

"How could I?—Louis d'Or?"

"Yes?"

"Wait a minute, please."

She passed him in a flash and, it seemed, as if in a flash, she was back, somewhat out of breath.

"This is for you—if you want it." She held a small card toward him.

He took it, his face flushing darkly as his eyes fell upon her pictured face. "This is for me?" he asked incredulously.

She nodded brightly.

To her surprise he made no comment, but silently slipped it into his breast pocket. "And now," he said gaily, "*il faut filer*. Bon voyage, and au revoir—next year, *fillette*!"

He waved his hat merrily, and had passed toward the road, a nonchalant, light-footed creature, while to the beat of his steps down the trail it seemed to Marie Louise the faint-stirring breeze bore back the sound—or was it only

the memory?—of a nursery rhyme he had often sung to her:

"*Sur le pont d'Avignon
On y danse, on y danse—*"

III

THE December sun poured its radiance upon the velvety lawns of Union Square, drenching grass, trees, tramps, idlers, babies and nurses in its flood—it is no respecter of persons, and in this bright, emerald-green breathing-spot in the very heart of old San Francisco's pulsing activities it smiled upon a singularly mixed crowd.

Upon one of the benches looking east sat a tattered figure, with weather-stained hat pulled well over the eyes. Had one been able to see, one might have been curiously arrested by the swift-changing mental drama passing over the pallid, hidden face.

"After all, Louis d'Or," ran the meditations, "it had to come to this—what could you expect? You are ill, very ill, homeless and penniless—in short, my friend, a beggar. Pahl! The word is brutal—realistic—it has no *esprit*. And when you come to face life without *esprit*—it is a very ugly fact. But what is this *esprit*, my poets, but a condition of the blood? Chemistry, all is chemistry! . . . Ha, Louis d'Or, poet, *blagueur*, *farceur*, what are you thinking? Is it for such as you to take heed of the material? Consider the lilies! *Allons!* . . . There still remains the Société de Bienfaisances. But—they have given you your *congé*—they have said finally, 'We are tired of you, Louis d'Or. Get out—and work.' *Hélas*, they do not understand, and they are women! . . . Women!"

He raised the smiling face of the conqueror, but in the midst of his transport a shock of pain crossed the pinched features and his head sank again. "It is inevitable, Louis d'Or," his soul whispered. "You have received your cue. Once more—to the footlights!"

He had been sitting there so long that when he at last arose an ex-

soldier, prone upon his stomach on the grass, raised his head and watched with some curiosity the grandiose, tattered figure passing down the gravel path.

"Who's de sick guy what t'inks he's on parade?" he grinned.

"That's Louis, the Frenchman," answered Orvis, the opium fiend, without turning to look. "When he wags his tail like that he thinks he's Emperor William patronizing God, or Teddy Roosevelt refereeing the fight. It's all in the dream, don't-cher-know." And Orvis resumed his, the other cackling while the retreating figure passed from view.

The weekly meeting of the Société de Bienfaisances had adjourned, but Madame la Présidente still lingered, delivering an impromptu lecture to the new director who threatened to become troublesome through the inexperience of her sympathies. She had just reached her irrefutably stern climax when there came a gentle knock at the door.

Her deferential young listener hastened to answer it.

A musical, inquiring voice reached Madame Leblanc's ears. "What is that?" she called peremptorily, and a disreputable figure emerged from the outer shadows into the room. "Ah, you, Louis d'Or! What do you want? We can do nothing more for you, as you have been told before. We do not support drunkards or vagabonds. Besides, the meeting has adjourned."

The man had advanced a step and now stood, hat in hand, waiting quietly until she should have finished. As the last phrase left her lips a smile of benignant gentleness illumined his gray face.

"Madame," he responded softly, "the Société de Bienfaisances never adjourns."

It was superb impudence, and Madame Leblanc measured him icily. "Enough," she commanded. "And—good afternoon!"

He drew himself up in dignified protest, with a certain gracious movement of the hand which Madame Leblanc remembered uneasily. "Ma-

dame la Présidente," he said, looking down into her eyes with sad reproach, "you mistake. It is not for the vagabond Louis d'Or that I have dared approach you."

Madame Leblanc was growing nervous. "For whom, then?" she demanded sharply.

"Madame," the chiding voice continued gravely, "it is for a poor poet—homeless, ill, starving—whom I left just now—in the dregs of his pride—upon a bench in the Plaza."

"Oh——!"

Madame Leblanc silenced the new director with a glance. "*Eh bien*," she prompted with suspicious hardness. "A poet—French?"

"Of Paris, madame." He spoke awesomely, as one speaks of heaven. It affected the new director like sacred music.

Madame Leblanc's voice went harder. "Well? What more? Explain. And I advise you, Louis d'Or, to be brief."

"As life, madame." The man drew himself up promptly, and then, sweetly, responding to the associated thought, "As Gringoire, madame," he added wistfully. He took a step toward his forbidding judge and stood straight, his tattered figure framed in a shaft of sunlight.

"Madame," he began in fine sonority, his nostril dilating grandly, "the Plaza is mad with sunshine today. The little children are there. Also the idle, the unfortunate, the outcast, the vagabond: life's little children whom an inscrutable Scheme makes weak—for the glorification of the strong! How? Listen, and you who are strong—you who are women, will understand. Among these little ones sits the poet of whom I speak to you. Blind. From birth. Madame, *N'importe!* . . . Therefore—poet. Therefore—erring. Therefore—forgive! For to him the vision—the moon men cry for—had obscured the sternness of the road, and he stumbled on, flinging his glad song into the chaos, unmindful of changing seasons, of the flight of years, of hunger and cold, of the dumb pleading of the body, until . . . Madame, on the

Plaza bench today I saw a terrible thing. I saw the quivering, neglected body rise up and smite the smile from a soul, the song from simple lips. And then, at last, I heard—I heard the maimed body cry out its bo-bo! Madame, it is but a child—to you—a little, sick, erring child, who wants to go to bed!"

He ended abruptly, unexpectedly, with sudden, suppliant arms outheld, his voice trembling weakly into a sob, and Madame Leblanc was left staring at him with wide, tremulous mouth.

She presently realized the silence. "You, Louis d'Or, you," she cried harshly, "why do you stand talking there? Go—quick!—bring your poet here."

There was a step, a turn, a snapping of the door. The man was gone.

Madame la Présidente turned upon the new director still standing near the door. "What are you crying for?" she demanded angrily. "The man is an accomplished liar—a consummate actor. Do you think I did not know he was speaking of himself? But what can you do for the moment? He takes you off your feet! I am quite sure he will come back in a minute with—himself. Louis d'Or is nothing if not dramatic; he—*Dieu*, what is that?"

But at the sickening crash the new director, flinging the door wide, had fled down the hall.

She was back again the next minute, white and breathless. "It is he—Gringoire. He has fallen—he is dead, I think—he——"

"Is acting! Quick, ring for the ambulance."

"Emergency?"

Madame la Présidente was half-way down the hall. Her answer came back indignantly. "He said he was of Paris. French Hospital, of course!"

The Société de Bienfaisances had not yet adjourned.

IV

"But, monsieur, these others do not complain, and they——"

"Monsieur le Docteur, how often must I tell you that I am not *comme ces autres!*" The long, fine hand majestically waved to silence the young resident physician leaning over the foot of the white iron bedstead. The eyes looking out from the drawn white face regarded him reproachfully.

The young resident physician was amused. "True," he returned seriously. "But you who have slept so often in the open, you cannot object to the snoring of a poor fellow-patient in a hospital ward. Nature——"

"Nature, Monsieur le Docteur, is a lady, full of unexpected reserves—she breathes deep, not loud. You who do not know that have still to live."

"And you——"

"Have lived—while I lived."

"Good!"

"Bad, you should say, now that I am about to die. Bad! What a word! What a presumption!"

"You have no regrets?"

"Regrets? *Dieu merci*, none. Life and I are quits. I owe it no excuses—I have never denied myself to its many calls. We were *bons camarades*—life and I."

Suddenly he raised himself upon his elbow, his face luminous. "I am what I am," he exclaimed, with a whimsical shrug of the eyebrow. "Born out of order. I have been consistent—I have lived out of order. Tartuffe? Why? I have my license! It is all duly recorded—here in the pocketbook under my pillow. All that I am—and—all—" his head drooped, he murmured hoarsely—"all that I—possess." Something had caught the satirical voice, his head fell back feebly, his eyes closed, his lips continued to move.

The doctor came round to the side, bending over him. The pale, smiling lips were mumbling, "Little girl—up—on—mountain—*Dieu*, He knows—sometimes—white moments—for—little girl—little girl—" the voice trailed off indistinctly.

He is dreaming of the Ideal, thought the young doctor. Had they not said the man had been something of a poet?—he leaned closer.

But silence had intervened. The doctor laid ear and hand to the quiet heart. Then he drew the sheet over the high, still features. Louis d'Or slept deep.

The superintendent bent over the shoulder of the young resident physician who had just unfolded a frayed, yellow bit of parchment.

"It looks like a copy of a birth certificate," said the doctor, peering through his glasses, and as his eye ran quickly down the page the words, "All that I am," spoken so grimly that morning, rang through his memory. "The writing has faded so, it is almost undecipherable—but here are names: '*M. le Docteur Raoul Perrier—déclaré—Marguerite Bonnat Coutourière—accouchée—enfant—nom de Louis d'Or—signé—François duc de Chartres—Jean Paul Comte d'—*' I can't make it out. H'm! No father recorded—a seamstress—and the nobility witnessing the registration of the birth of her child. Queer mixture! But possible, very possible. He said he had his '*licence*.' If nobody claims this, I wish you would give it to me as a curio." He passed it over his shoulder to the superintendent, who took it nearer the light.

"And this," the doctor continued, drawing from the shabby pocketbook what seemed a card wrapped about in many folds of white silk, "this—" Some words penciled on the silk arrested his eye, and peering closer he read: "A little girl up on the mountain." The man's dying refrain whispered itself again in his ears. His curious fingers sped. With a start, he gazed upon the pictured loveliness, a vague resemblance to something he had seen before, he knew not where, holding him. Then, with a glance toward the superintendent near the window, still intent upon the blurred parchment, he hastily restored the picture to its delicate wrappings.

"And this," he continued aloud, "this we will place, face downward, over the heart of Louis d'Or."

He was a bit sentimental, the young resident physician.

SPHINXES WITHOUT SECRETS

By Richard Duffy

MRS. ALLONBY—Define us as a sex.

LORD ILLINGWORTH—Sphinxes without secrets.

—“*A Woman of No Importance*,” Act I.

“I EXPECT that woman will be the last thing civilized by man,” is memorable to Meredithians. If they read it when young, and after a feministic ordeal, they were bound to think it of the wisest utterances of men—not man. Should the ordeal habit have grown upon them, it may be the fact appears to them as one of the happiest fancies in which dull destiny indulges. The truth is, men don't want women to be civilized. They are the one problem left unsolved, the one difficulty unremoved, the one fascination remaining fresh and alluring. They are the supreme luxury, the unfailing interest of life. And they are all this because men want them to be.

At the outset of his career a man aims at money—at the climax he spends it—for a woman. The man who, having achieved success, sits back and tells you he has no interest in women will usually be found, unless quite abnormal, to be devoted to his aged mother, an old-maid sister or an aunt. Moreover, he is the hero of one of these, which is all a man can be to any woman.

The older he is the younger the woman *qui lui impose son illusion*. For the younger the woman the more aboriginal her artifice—should one say art, rather? Nothing is so venturous as youth, for all its calculating quality. Judgment has not set in; and youth plays large chances on narrow margins, because youth has a lifetime before.

What can be more seductive to the calm eye of age? “He is easily deceived by women,” says Shaw's Cæsar to Cleopatra, with a mournful air. “Their eyes dazzle him; and he sees them not as they are, but as he wishes them to appear to him.” The only difference between Shaw's Cæsar and the man in the drawing-room is that Shaw makes Cæsar self-conscious in the contact. It is fair to suspect that when Cæsar was really dazzled by a pair of eyes he hardly had time for psychological auscultation, though he may have thought it all over from the beginning when he got home.

Seeing them not as they are, but as he wishes them to appear to him, is the whole secret of the mystery which has lain about woman since the first comedy long, long ago in a well-watered and fruitful garden. Sententious sayings have been uttered about the mysteriousness of woman from that fateful day. Unquestionably, Adam himself tried to explain to the birds in the trees his lapse from the business of seeing and admiring, by an apostrophe to the strange nature of that other being on the premises. Adam, therefore, was the first poet; and none has surpassed him in the tradition he built up round his heroine.

To be sure, the tradition has taken on the tarnishment of time. We profess to be cynical; and a sentimentalist has said, “There's no mystery about a woman a third-class detective can't

penetrate." If he were not a sentimentalist, he could not have said it. Being a wit as well as sentimentalist, he added in the next breath, "Unless she happened to be the woman in whom the detective believed."

In the man's believing lies the essence of the woman's mystery. She may have pretty eyes, a poor nose, indifferent hair, but fair, smooth skin. Absorbed in the study of her eyes and of her skin, he notices not nose or hair, nor that her hands are thick and her ankles bulging. But then, few men are critical about ankles, for all that has been said about them. Ankles are like cigars. Connoisseurship is required. Eyes and a fair, smooth skin go far, if her disposition be sufficiently astute to seem tractable; and, behold, she is the Queen of Sheba to him. The spell is cast. She will weave it in endless intricacies—if she thinks he is worth the while. Once you have seen a magician take a live rabbit out of an empty hat, and cannot deny, you swallow his other tricks in simple, comfortable delight and wonder.

It is not to be supposed that scenic accessories are unnecessary. There must be propinquity, first of all. Other conditions equal, the more fortuitous the propinquity, the shorter the time-limit for the achievement of the woman's magic. A downright business man may be close to his stenographer for a period of six months and not become aware of the charm of her voice or of her eyes. On the deck of an ocean liner in May, by moonlight of the third evening out, he will have found her possessed of many additional graces, which are only apparent. The woman who is a good sailor has great advantages in such a setting. Some women triumph by candlelight, others in the less scrupulous illumination of the sun; and from the first occasion on which she goes to Sunday-school mama and six-year Marjorie herself are at pains to ascertain Marjorie's propitious interval. The breakfast surprises of some night-blooming brides afford a field of humor and pathos that fictionists have left comparatively untilled. With a boy

mama's main aim is to keep him looking decent.

When a boy is born everybody rejoices, even the mother-in-law. College, a career, wealth, fame even are envisaged before the physician has left the house. When a girl is born—well, there's another marriage to be encompassed. For the boy every avenue of opportunity is open; but the girl, rich or poor, simply has to get married. The declaration sounds outmoded, doesn't it, in view of the army of women doctors, lawyers, business women and what-not? Why, women were never more self-dependent than at this stage of the world's progress. The records show it; everybody says it's so. Everybody, except the women themselves. Yes, even the most mannified of them, once they break out of the shell that encases them day after day. They learned early that they could not be adroit at the game of their sex; or, considering the men they could meet, judged the game not to be worth the candle. Some of them, it happens, have loved and lost. How jarringly sentimental it sounds, though it is true. Alone they make their way, enjoy their liberty, and marvel at the strong heart of the child-bearer and the home-keeper. For all that, they will not have "Mrs." on their tombstone; and the woman has not yet been born who did not have an anticipatory pride in that distinction.

Moving sidewalks are a fact and airships a near realization. Self-transportation may be reduced to so unconscious an effort that we shall have no use of legs as locomotives; but as long as there is any need for a Census Bureau—a department constantly growing—women must be women. There has never been any general feeling that men should be less men, or that there should be fewer of them. Nature works her will in despite of The Hague and of the Higher Education of Women. From the beginning one was needed to watch the cave fire while the stronger, more daring other roamed the forests in search of prey. Home he brought her primordial roasts and

steaks, where now the adventuring one returns with a box of bonbons or a bunch of violets, having carefully provided her with accounts at the victualer's.

The *motif* of Nature remains unaltered, though centuries of lovers have invested it with an embroidery of imagination and sentiment; and it is certain that men and women have done much to make Nature sprightly and attractive. Herein lies Art's solidest defense and incomparable achievement. Poets that starved in garrets and were deeply loved by middle-aged landladies, to whom they were insolvably in debt, have taught soldiers honeyed phrases and revealed to them undreamt tactics. Musicians, themselves forespent of unhappy love, have given the open sesame to pretty, *bourgeoise* maidens, who in the presence of lumbering swains could only lose their blushes before a pianoforte and the intricacies of a sonata. In novels and plays for the ten thousandth time the world has learned how the maid enabled her ardent pursuer to master the combination of her time-lock heart. So stories have ever been written and so they will be written. Those that tell how he lost the girl are the exceptions—and have limited sales.

Curiously enough, most of the mystery about women has been created by poets, playwrights and novelists. A man's aim in creating a heroine—though such production is believed to be largely for feminine consumption—is fixed to make her as subtle as he may. His imagination enjoys a satisfaction in thus working which the majority of his women readers do not suspect. In the range of poetry and fiction it is safe to venture that the most famous heroines have been bodied forth from the minds of men in the effort to realize the ideal they have formed of some very corporeal woman they have loved.

On the other hand, the most admirable heroes have been created by women. Witness: Rochester, John Halifax, Adam Bede. Only rarely does one meet the woman who considers Captain Dobbin a hero. Yet Dobbin

is a man's hero. He acts as clumsily as every man feels he is comporting himself before the woman he loves. For every man, loving a woman, places her on a pedestal. She is exhilarated by the elevation, and tries to be worthy of it. In that lies all the skill she needs. Nor may her talent be small. The lover, unless he be a boy, has a critical faculty as well as a creative. If the statue does not suit the pedestal, as a finished sculptor he tears it down.

In truth there are only three mysteries remaining about a woman. First: Why she gets off a car the wrong way. Secondly: Why in traveling with a woman friend there will always be a dispute about paying the fare. Third: Her *toilette*. The first two will never be explained; the third only men milliners and ladies' tailors have fathomed. A woman's hat, for instance, might be anything from a lamp-shade to a bridal bouquet. Many of them make the *gourmet* think of some undiscovered salad. With pins a woman can hold her whole framework together, or fasten a paper parcel. It is next to impossible for her to fasten a parcel with twine; but with ribbons, many-hued and frail imitations of cord, rope, cables and iron chains, she has bound bravos and kings. She does it all the time.

Men ought to know this. Other men have told them so, and published it to the world in volumes unnumbered, and in epigrams thick as the sands of the hour-glass of life. If a man of maturity essay to speak of women, his mouth is full of witticisms and proverbs. He forgets the lesson of his own experiences. Not always has he shone at his best in personal adventure. Therefore he pinches the salt of wits, savors the wisdom of philosophers, who, we may be sure, struck intellectual fire after a defeat. The wit is sage, the philosopher witty, in the cold gray dawn of self-discovery. A man, you know, never gives himself away so completely as with the woman he loves. This is true, whether he be that impersonal unit, a steel magnate, or the extreme opposite, an actor. If he is

sympathique to the woman she drinks in his every word, as if she were listening to a palmist or an astrologer. Imagine the two making love, each to *His Own*. They are at dinner—the most popular tryst:

THE STEEL MAGNATE—I've had an awful day.

THE WOMAN—You're looking better than ever. Hard work agrees with you. (*She smiles.*)

HE (*eyes brightening*)—That's because I won out.

SHE—You always do, I'm sure.

HE—It has taken me six months to do those people up, but I've got them down now, and I mean to rub it in. (*She laughs appreciatively.*) I've lain awake nights, thinking over this thing, but I was determined to get them up against the ropes, and—

SHE—You must go a little easier now, dear.

HE—Not on your life! I'm built like a battleship, and I'm only just beginning to show this town how to play the game.

SHE—I see I shall have to take care of you, if you won't take care of yourself. (*He orders another bottle.*)

So he goes on for three hours. When she takes the conversation in hand to tell of a contretemps with her milliner he listens fretfully. She, on the contrary, listens with keen attention during the whole evening.

The actor, it is hard to admit, does not so often order bottles. Customarily he orders glasses. His vis-à-vis does not talk of her milliner, but of the queer people that live in her boarding-house:

THE WOMAN—It seems awful funny to be sitting here with you after seeing you in the play.

THE ACTOR—How was I this afternoon?

SHE (*drooping lids*)—You're always lovely to me.

HE—I don't mean that way. I mean my performance.

SHE—Just as fine as ever.

HE—Did you notice the change of business I made in the second act? (*She looks very sympathetic, but blank.*) Don't you remember when I take the star's hand and say, "Princess"? Then she lets her head fall on my breast, and I kiss her.

SHE—Oh, you mean that!

HE—Yes. Well, today I changed it. I kissed her twice.

SHE—Did you? I didn't—

HE—She thinks it's much better—

SHE—Well, I don't.

HE—Better business, I mean. She's

played the part with Sothern, too, and she says I have him faded to a faint shade of pink. I know I'm better than Sothern in this part. He may be all right in "Hamlet" and "Lord Chumley," but for a part like this, what is required is—well, it's hard to say just what, but I've got it. Everybody says I have, and I myself know. I'm getting about fifteen mash letters every day now.

SHE (*suddenly*)—Are you?

HE—But they don't mean anything to me.

SHE—What do you do with them?

HE—Keep them, of course. Why, I'm making a better drag here all the time. Even if it is a stock company, it's in New York, and some day I'll hit Broadway, and then if I don't make 'em sit up—why, say, I've got all the critics with me already. You know what Alan Dale said of me, don't you?

The woman with the steel magnate knows and cares as little about Alan Dale as the woman with the actor cares about steel. Nevertheless each is patient beyond belief in angling season. And the woman who is genuinely clever knows that it is always angling season—even after marriage. If she cares, she never forgets the lessons in the art imparted by mama, who got them from grandmama, and which have been refined and elaborated by experience. Her manoeuvres are none the less intricate when she is the dominant factor of the combination. Outsiders may wonder at the authority certain women exercise over their husbands. They should not wonder. These are the frequent cases when a man doesn't deserve better. One should rather admire the woman who, possessed of fewer advantages than the man, has been able to exaggerate successfully their value. It makes the husband's men friends mad; it makes the wife's women friends envious.

Looking back for a moment it would seem as though we had been considering two people set in deadly and eternal opposition to each other. We have. All the trust, faith, confidence, tenderness, yearning, attachment, sacrifice, self-abnegation bound up in a woman's love for a man, or in a man's love for a woman, is almost equally accompanied by mistrust, doubt, unbelief, pitilessness, repulsion, disgust, selfishness and the cruelty of an Attila. Love-making is war, and we all know

Sherman's definition of war. It is also the most artistic and inexhaustible of human diversions—the Universal Hide-and-Seek. The great secret of success at it is complete illusion on both sides. We look at lovers or happy married people learnedly and are amazed that they should have mated. We look down on them, even. Meanwhile we are quite unconscious of our own illusion about the woman in whose smiling eyes we see the Valleys of Delight. The great thing to do is to play the game, to keep one's illusion intact. Alas, one cannot play it alone. The sphinx may have no secrets; but she must always seem to have them. That strange egoist, man, half fool, half philosopher, will have her so, whether she be washer-

woman or princess. This lacking, all is lacking. Meredith has expressed his cry:

Am I failing? for no longer can I cast

A glory round about this head of gold.

Glory, she wears, but springing from the mold:

Not like the consecration of the Past!

Is my soul beggared? Something more than earth

I cry for still: I cannot be at peace

In having Love upon a mortal lease.

I cannot take the Woman at her worth!

Where is the ancient wealth wherewith I clothed

Our human nakedness, and could endow

With spiritual splendor a white brow

That else had grinned at me the fact I loath'd?

A kiss is but a kiss now! and no wave

Of a great flood that whirls me to the sea.

But as you will! we'll sit contentedly,

And eat our pot of honey on the grave.



THE COMFORTING

By Owen R. Washburn

LAST night I woke, dear love, before the dawn,
 And heard the surging tides creep inland far
 As, by the lure of pleasant meadows drawn,
 The sea flowed o'er the bar.
 The winds were out, their voices woke the night,
 And cool from baths in lonely billows deep
 They came with glimmers of an astral light
 To call me from my sleep.
 I found thee not, dear love, beneath my hand,
 Nor heard thy voice, low toned to quiet me,
 Only the murmur of the flooded land,
 The wind from off the sea.
 But even as my joy in love had fled
 Love sent the morn, and I was comforted.



IF she knew how much we needed her, the old-fashioned girl would once again be fashionable.

CHUMS

By Arthur Stanley Wheeler

“MY life has been one of continuous self-sacrifice.”

Mrs. Kemp made this modest statement a few moments after the Mount Vernon boat had left the pier at Washington. I did not know why she felt called upon to make it at that time, or, in fact, to make it at all. No unwary question of mine had precipitated it logically; and certainly young Kemp had said nothing to drive his mother toward a burst of confidence.

“Perhaps,” I thought, “the lady imagines that her obviously excellent physical condition has led me to misjudge her as a person of no cares; or perhaps she merely hates to leave a comparative stranger in suspense about her personal history.”

“That is very sad, Mrs. Kemp,” I commiserated, because I knew that she expected sympathy. “I hope some of your sacrifices have brought rewards.”

“My son’s love is my reward,” she replied. “I have devoted my life to him. We are great chums, my son and I.”

As she spoke, she stretched out a hand to pat one of the young man’s; and a gleam of affection, savage, but genuine, redeemed her peevish, self-indulgent face for the instant. I remembered a phrase of my cousin’s letter, “The two are great chums,” and wondered whether that phrase had been borrowed from Mrs. Kemp herself. My cousin, who has a habit of doing and demanding vague kindnesses, had written to me some days before, requesting that I show attention to “a very dear old friend,” even then *en route* for the National Capital on a sightseeing pilgrimage.

Some weak women manage to write strongly characteristic letters, and my Cousin Maisie is one of them. When I read that epistle of hers, I smiled; for the name of the very dear old friend was strange to me, and I suspected that the words “middle-aged and casual acquaintance” would have furnished a more accurate description, from Maisie’s standpoint, of the imminent Mrs. Kemp.

“If the superlative degree,” I said, “were suddenly dropped from the English language, my good cousin would either die like a fish on a sand-bank or learn to write French.”

And, holding the sixteen-words-to-a-page letter on my knee, I speculated concerning the kind of attention which it would be necessary for me to show those people. Beyond the fact that the two were great chums, Maisie had omitted, quite characteristically, to give any definite information about their tastes and peculiarities; she had written, indeed, that the son was a clergyman—but there were, I reflected, clergymen and clergymen. Would this one be of the militant variety, firm of grip and Napoleonic of eye—a sincere person and useful, but somewhat painfully conscious of his neighbor’s shortcomings? In that case I should consider my duty done when I had played host at a hotel luncheon, and had obtained from a long-suffering congressman a special pass to the White House and cards for the galleries at the Capitol. But if, on the other hand, he proved to be cherubic and appealing, I might be forced to assume the rôle of courier on trips to the Bureau, and the Smithsonian, and the Observatory, and the Treasury, and the Monument, and

Arlington, and Cabin John Bridge, and Mount Vernon, to say naught of Capitol and White House aforementioned. The prospect daunted me a little, not because I held a grudge against all or any of Washington's "places of interest," but because I had visited most of them from five to ten times with previous guests, and consequently their powers of attraction had become a bit weather-worn; I could have repeated in my sleep the professional patter of the Treasury guides, or the stereotyped Tale of the Capitol, beginning outside with the unhappy Father of His Country, "whose sword is here, but whose clothes are in the Museum," and ending in the Rotunda with six-fingered Pocahontas. Also, it seemed that whatever the son might be, the mother would prove a colorless and repressed woman, pathetically unattractive; for when mother and son are advertised as chums, one is generally safe in assuming that the elder of the twain has sunk her own individuality and interests in the interests and individuality of the younger, in order to make sure of his company.

Alas for the vanity of human guesses! I liked the real Kemp from the outset. His sense of humor was not very vigorous, but he was far from being self-centred or unduly critical. His opinions were clean-cut, if not remarkably original, and my first thought was: "What an excellent husband he would make for a certain type of woman!" There was something about him which suggested a fireside, and a capable wife darning stockings, and one child cutting out pictures from a popular magazine, and another asleep in the cradle upstairs. Kemp, perhaps, would be thinking of his Sunday sermon—for his was a mind not to need solitude as an aid to thought—and now and then he would glance at his helpmeet's busy fingers, or at the yellow head in the light of the pot-bellied lamp, and render thanks for his blessings. His inborn feeling of responsibility would keep him in the straight and narrow path, and his vein of mysticism would prevent him from doubting, in dark

days or in the still watches of the night, his right to exact a lifetime's service from a good woman and to confer the inestimable benefit of existence upon progeny. The wife would love him much, and pity him a little, and protect him from petty annoyances, and grow old peacefully beside him; the children—there would be more of them as the years went on—would be healthy, and would eventually marry and produce offspring in their turn; and thus Kemp would fulfil his logical destiny, contributing not only to his own happiness but also, in his share, to the well-being of his nation. . . . Physically, he was less tall than short, with Anglo-Saxon hair and coloring. I judged that his face, if shorn of its blond beard, would have seemed boyish.

By reason of this liking which he inspired, I found myself acting as guide with a good grace. He was easy to talk with, while as for his mother . . . But now that I have come back (by a roundabout route) to the mother, it were better to resume my camp-chair on the deck of the Mount Vernon boat, and let Mrs. Kemp continue to talk for herself.

"We are very congenial," she went on, still patting Kemp's hand. "Far more congenial than my husband and I used to be. My husband, I may say, was a good man, but trying—*exceedingly* trying—to a woman of as delicate a temperament as mine. Toward the latter part of his life he suffered from an affliction of the stomach, and had to live entirely on porridge. It made him irritable—so much so that he would fly out at me if I even suggested that he ought to be more calm! But I bore his fits of temper patiently; and when he was dying he said to me: 'Lorena, you've been a good wife.' Yes, that's exactly what he said—so I think perhaps he repented of his unkindness at the last."

Kemp moved uneasily.

"Look at that couple over there by the rail, mother," he said. "We saw them—don't you remember?—at the Monument yesterday. He's blind, and she is describing to him everything on

shore as the boat passes by. Evidently they're Northerners, and man and wife. Think what courage it must have required, both on her part and on his, to undertake such a journey! A thing like that helps one's faith in human nature."

"Hnfh!" sniffed his mother. "I'll wager she only takes care of him for the sake of his money. You'll never get on in this world, Harry, unless you stop being so trustful. Do you know"—turning to me—"my son, for all his twenty-nine years, is as innocent as a baby about some things. Why, if I didn't watch him, he'd be taken in by all sorts of people! For instance: no matter where we go, the girls all make a dead set at him. Not that I blame them, for Harry would be a fine catch for any girl; but, as I tell him, one should always be doubtful about people's motives, and especially about the motives of modern young women. In *my* day the girls were not so forward—though I must say that some of them were not quite modest according to my notions, even then. I don't like young females who giggle and flirt, and think about nothing except their dresses and their looks; there are a good many of that kind in my son's parish. Whenever he has to meet them I always say to him: 'Now, Harry, just remember that any one of those creatures would give her very soul to be able to exhibit you as her prize, and *be careful!*' But the giggly girls aren't half so bad, after all, as the serious ones. The serious ones, you see, invariably fall head-over-heels in love with my son at first sight—sincerely in love, I mean. They can't help it, I suppose. We met one of them in the country two Summers ago. She was a school-teacher, and——"

At that point the speaker stopped abruptly. Whether Kemp gave her some secret sign which he reserved for specially desperate occasions, I don't know; suffice it to say that she stopped.

"Perhaps you'd like to get a view of the Arsenal, and the much-discussed statue of Frederic the Great," I suggest-

ed. "We must be passing them now—one sees them from the other side of the boat."

Kemp rose at once, but his mother professed herself entirely indifferent to "any old foreign statues," and elected to stay where she was.

"Back yonder," I said to Kemp, as we reached the port rail, "is the row of buildings used by the War College, and looking straight across you can see Frederic. He's not very impressive, at this distance; you see he stands pretty well back from the shore."

"I see," he said. "It's a queer place for the statue of a Prussian conqueror, isn't it? If my father could be here, he would be interested. Frederic was one of his heroes."

"Has your father been dead long?" I asked.

"About ten years. He was a teacher at Ware University, and despite his admiration for conquerors, one of the gentlest souls I ever knew. I was too young to appreciate him very clearly while he lived, but since his death I've been gradually gaining in reverence for him. Almost everything that I can remember is in his favor—and I suppose his life was not an easy one in some ways."

The truth of the supposition seemed extremely probable; and it also seemed likely that certain of the paternal difficulties had descended to the son. Kemp's face, in the silence which ensued, looked tired and almost old. Suddenly his eyes brightened.

"What a pretty picture!" he exclaimed. "See!"

Following the indication of his glance I saw a girl-child about three years old trotting across a small section of the deck from her enthusiastic mother to her equally enthusiastic father. Without doubt she made a pretty sight; but I was less entertained by her than by her critic.

"If you're so fond of children, Kemp," I said, "you ought to marry."

He laughed, his gaze still clinging to the child. Then his eyes clouded as suddenly as they had sparkled.

"My dear fellow, a salary of twelve

hundred dollars imposes limitations," he parried evasively.

The mention of his salary gave him an opportunity to turn the conversation to the subject of his work, and I spent the next twenty minutes in listening to a description of social and industrial conditions in the town of Shelby, or Welby, I forget which. I'm afraid I cared comparatively little about Welby or Shelby; but it always adds to one's respect for a man to learn that he believes in the work he is doing.

Kemp went below at the end of the twenty minutes to get a drink of water. Scarcely had he disappeared when his mother hove in sight.

"Where is my son?" she demanded.

"I think he's picked up a girl somewhere up in the bow," I answered basely.

She ruffled like an aggrieved hen.

"I think your language is coarse—and I don't believe Harry would do such a thing as that, anyhow. The woman must have approached him brazenly."

"Cheer up!" I said. "I lied to you. He's only gone below for a moment."

"Oh!" She was much relieved. Then a glimmer of intelligence seemed to penetrate her brain. "You mustn't think I'm jealous about my son," she told me earnestly. "I always leave him absolutely free to do just as he pleases. It is my hope that he will marry some worthy girl very soon—and then I shall go away and die quietly and sadly, all by myself, for I couldn't live without him. . . . Oh, what is that place with the white-washed trees over there?"

"That," I replied, "is a place of amusement devoted to the interests of our colored brethren and sisters. Its colloquial name is 'Razor Beach,' and the explanation of the white tree-trunks is simple. Whenever a ducky is killed there in a fight, the proprietors paint a tree in his memory. You see there are a good many white trees. Quite an original scheme, don't you think?"

"Don't believe him, mother," said Kemp, who had come up behind us

unobserved. "He's only joking. The trees are probably painted for ornament, or for protection against insects."

"I had already discerned that he was flippant," returned Mrs. Kemp stiffly. "You forget that I am a great reader of character, Harry."

She continued to regard me with gloomy suspicion until we arrived at Mount Vernon, where her attention was distracted by the fee of twenty-five cents, which she considered an outrage.

"They ought to let us in free," she proclaimed in loud tones. "We've patronized their old steamboat, haven't we? I wouldn't pay it, Harry, if I were you; you know you haven't any too much money to spend on this trip."

We followed the stream of pilgrims up the winding path to the sepulchre of the great President. Before the grating that shields the big white sarcophagus voices were hushed and hats lifted; for though the average American is to some extent an irreverent and captious person, he pays an instinctive homage to the noble and famous dead—if seldom to the famous and noble living. Mrs. Kemp, however, being a law unto herself, was not impressed.

"I don't see why we should make such a row over Washington," she announced. "He did some very questionable things when he was alive, I've been given to understand."

"Hush, mother!" said Kemp quickly, and the antique negro guide who stood by the tomb looked at her in surprise but having better manners than she, made no comment.

Mount Vernon seems to have a special grandeur of its own—a grandeur reminiscent of the man whose home it was, but also in a measure intrinsic and independent. Without analyzing the beauties of the spot, one can understand why Washington loved it; if he had not loved it, he would not have been the man he was. I looked curiously at Kemp as we passed by the Old Tomb and breasted the rise toward the house, to see how he was affected; he shook his head and

smiled, as if to say that he could not give fitting words to his impressions.

But his mother did not allow his silence to be long. She wanted to know what "all those funny little coops" were, at the rear of the main dwelling; and when told that one of them was a kitchen, remarked that she should think the food would have been cold by the time it reached the table—a possibly sapient observation. Her intensely audible criticisms of our fellow-visitors were not so appropriate.

We purchased the usual glasses of milk and made the usual tour of the house. Then we went out on the long, paved veranda, and sat down to rest and look out over the Potomac. While we sat there a new load of pilgrims arrived by train; in company with those who had come by boat with us, they flooded the house and overflowed through the front doors. They were good-natured, pleasant-faced people, most of them, hailing from West and North and South, and enjoying their outing in approved American fashion by seeing and doing as much as possible in a given time. I was admiring the patriarchal aspect of an old man leading three cheerful, muscular, Middle-Western daughters, when,

"Harry!" hissed Mrs. Kemp, with the abruptness of a locomotive whistle. "Harry! There's that school-teacher who was in love with you two years ago—the one who might have caught you if I hadn't been around. What can she be doing here?"

Kemp made no response for a moment; then he said quite calmly:

"I think she's here on her wedding journey. I didn't know she was going to be married, but I'm very much mistaken if she and the man beside her are not bride and groom. I'll go over and find out."

Whereupon he stood up, and crossed to the pair in question, who were near the farthest doorway. I could see the girl blush vividly as she recognized him; she was a nice-looking girl, dark-haired, and slightly above the average height.

He brought them back with him, and performed introductions. The bridegroom seemed ill at ease, perhaps on account of natural embarrassment, perhaps because he was worried by his raiment, which was of an evidently unusual splendor. He tugged at his collar, and let the bride do most of the talking. His appearance and the few words he mumbled indicated that he was stupid, but tolerably prosperous and habitually kind. Oh, well; one supposes that the field for a country teacher to pick and choose from is limited. Doubtless the dark-haired girl had realized the advisability of doing the best she could before her dark hair commenced to be shot with gray. Kind and tolerably prosperous men are not to be chanced upon at every turn, and instruction of the Young Idea at thirty, or forty, or even fifty dollars a month ceases to be wildly attractive after four or five years' experience. Also, waiting on the strength of an uncertainty is dreary business.

I had not imagined that Mrs. Kemp could be so sweet to any woman as she was to that bride; her discontented mouth fairly dripped verbal honey. But when the couple had left us she turned on Kemp.

"I'm perfectly positive she's in love with you again—the impudent thing!" she asserted. "She don't care any more for that stick of a husband of hers, now she's got him, than *that*! Aren't you glad I saved you from such a fate as his?"

Her son was silent.

"Aren't you, Harry?"

Still no answer. Kemp seemed to be counting the paving-stones at his feet.

"Harry!" She seized his arm, and began to whimper, totally oblivious of the publicity of the scene. Tears started in her eyes; for the second time a genuine love—furious, unreasoning—transformed her selfish face. "Harry, I say!" She peered at him desperately, tremulously. "Look at me! Speak to me! Aren't you glad that I saved you from being that woman's husband?"

"Oh, yes, mother, I guess so," said Kemp. "For goodness' sake, don't cry."

AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR

By Louis Joseph Vance

SOMETHING later than one o'clock of a humid autumnal afternoon Katherine Duhamel sat in the reception-room of an up-town restaurant, awaiting her husband.

Diagonally across the room a man was leaning negligently against the frame of an inner window which looked upon the lobby. He was watching Mrs. Duhamel.

She knew this, but her consciousness was inevident. For the time being she was curiously insensible to premonition. She was thinking that Duhamel was almost a quarter of an hour late. He was, as a rule, punctual to his engagements with her.

Speculating idly on the cause of his detention, she sat bended forward a trifle, hands in long gloves of warm gray folded in her lap, her gaze in pensive abstraction fixed upon the smoked-pearl handle of her umbrella. The latter, slim in its sheath of scarlet silk, lent a solitary touch of ardent color to a costume which, carried out in soft shades of gray from the drooping plumes of her hat to her small light gaiters, seemed peculiarly individual to its wearer.

He who watched was nothing to her—a vague shadow on the far boundary of her thoughts. In her experience there had been many such. She was a woman of that number whose destiny it is to be admired of men, whatever their walk in life: an exotic caste whose charm, singular to itself, may be no less obscurely defined than as an involuntary exhalation of the elusive fragrance of allurements. Her personality—her body with its slender, rounded grace,

her face with its smile fugitively thoughtful and sweet, her mind which had persisted in remaining naïve despite its maturity and cultivation—seemed to diffuse about her an air of profound and impassioned purity.

It is after such women that men look with an indefinably regretful longing, as though something in life ineffably desirable has been denied them.

Presently the man by the window seemed to arrive at a point of decision. He stood erect and began to pick a way through clustered chairs toward Mrs. Duhamel. He was tall, fine-drawn and self-confident in manner; in his lean, handsome face his bold eyes were large and uneasy. He smiled inscrutably as he moved, appreciating the instinctive stiffening of the woman's frame as intuitively she sensed annoyance.

On the other hand, while she guessed his purpose to address her, she did not anticipate anything in the nature of a scene. The restaurant was an annex to a hotel of superior standing; she was known there, for Duhamel liked the place; the room was not destitute of other guests, and past its door flowed an incessant thin stream of waiters and patrons. In such surroundings a curt word should suffice to discourage the most assured admirer. Nevertheless she could have wished Duhamel had not been late.

As the man drew slowly nearer she unclasped her hands and lifted one to the handle of her umbrella. Otherwise she ignored the impending incident; yet, as he paused momentarily before her, she was surprised by a sudden inexplicable flutter of pulses, accompanied by a little shiver—as

though his shadow falling athwart her was cold.

He did not immediately speak, but after a moment of calculation caught the back of a near-by chair in a firm grasp, swung it round, and sat down, facing her. Mrs. Duhamel started to rise. He stopped her with an inexorable gesture and a single word: "Kate."

Temporarily her breeding stood her in admirable stead; she was of a class greedy of public betrayal of its emotions. Though the monosyllable spoken by that voice precipitated the temple of her heart's gods in fragments thundering about her astounded ears, to a casual observer her composure would have seemed unperturbed.

But it was no passing regard that the man bent upon her; and he was alert to remark her instant loss of color, the pallid line of lips that had a moment gone been crimson, the swift flash of her eyes to his face and the horror that afterward informed them. He saw, furthermore, something of which she was ignorant: the splitting of a seam down the back of her glove as her fingers tightened upon the umbrella in the attempt to constrain her self-control. And he smiled, again impenetrably.

"You seem to remember me, Kate?"

She nodded, the muscles of her throat working; her lips parted and it was as if the word forced itself through them: "*You!*"

"I," he agreed, with a quiet laugh. "Oh," he began to explain, with an air, "the papers lied." He talked with ease in accents pleasantly modulated. He continued, evidently amused: "It was being borne in upon me that 'Now is the time for disappearing'—as the song says. I knew you wouldn't grieve . . . for me. The collision seemed providential, when it came, and I thought it all out while the wreckers were chopping me out from under the car. I wasn't hurt. I ambled off as soon as I could and helped an ambitious reporter identify the body of another poor devil as my own. . . . That was ten years ago, wasn't it, Kate?"

"Where—where have you been?" she demanded in a choked voice.

"Going to and fro upon the face of the earth, like the fellow in the Bible. Did you fret, Kate? You shouldn't 've." He adjusted himself more comfortably in the chair. "You're a sight handsomer woman than you were a girl—and that's saying a whole lot." Then, with a conscious laugh: "Am I so greatly changed?"

She neither answered nor moved; even her eyes stared fixedly, blinded, out of a face frozen in a cast of pain. At length she was realizing the shattering immensity of this blow; and was stunned beyond immediate consciousness either of self or her surroundings. Her wits astray in a void of inconsequence, one fact alone loomed portentous against the bleak horizon of her understanding: that the grave of her past had yielded up its dead. And spiritually she recoiled from the man as though in fact he had been some shape of sheeted corruption, poisoning the air she breathed, come to stalk forever at her side and render her days and nights alike long dreams of terror. . . .

Unmoved, he went on, drumming an inaudible tattoo on the chair-arm with long muscular fingers. "You wouldn't think I'd been on the still-hunt for you a whole month, would you, Kate? Well, I have—even went so far as to drop off the train up home and ask 'round for you. I wasn't recognized, and no one seemed to know what had become of you; said you'd left about the time I cashed in. Pure chance is responsible for this happy reunion; I just happened to see you on the street an hour or so ago. Wasn't sure—couldn't believe my eyes; so I followed. . . . Are you waiting for someone, Kate?"

She said nothing; his words beat vainly against the walls of her perceptions, like the chant of a distant surf. Subconsciously her memory was registering his every phrase and gesture, noting the changes a decade had wrought in the man; but consciously she was faint with fear lest her husband should surprise them.

The man did not press for an answer;

he seemed content to be allowed the lion's share of the conversation.

"I say, you're grown to be a fine-looking woman, Kate." His eyes appraised her with approbation, covetously. "You've done yourself pretty average well, haven't you? That's a stunning dress you're wearing. Where'd you get the money? Hope you've got a wad of it; I haven't gathered much moss, and I don't know as I can afford to support my wife in your present splendor. . . . What's thematter?"

She had started violently; a swift rush of color tinted her face. "Please!" she begged with emotion. And he was quiet for a time, while, with visible struggle, she re-collected her faculties, bracing herself to cope with this instant emergency.

"Why," she asked, trembling—"why have you come back?"

He assumed an expression of astonishment. "For you, of course. A man doesn't forget a woman like you, Kate. . . ."

The flush deepened in her face and she quivered as if he had struck her a blow. She moistened her lips furtively, seeming to try to speak; but said nothing.

"Besides, I'm tired of the road; I've come back to claim my bride and settle down to be a model husband."

This time his words demanded a reply. Mrs. Duhamel sat up, unconsciously placing the red silk umbrella across her knees and holding it so, rigidly, in the tense grasp of her slender hands. She stared persistently away from him, at the opposite wall, at nothing, her every thought concentrated on her design to rid herself of him, if only for a little while—her design to avert at whatever cost the impending meeting with Duhamel. . . . Yet the only words that her lips would frame were simple and indirect: "I cannot."

"Can't what? You mean you won't take me back?"

She inclined her head almost imperceptibly.

"Why?" he persisted, with an undertone of resentment.

"I—I loathe you," she replied in an expressionless voice. "I could not live with you." Still she was looking away, nor dared meet his eyes. "You left me ten years ago—you went away, abandoned, deserted me. You caused me to believe you dead. I . . ." She faltered and fell still.

He nodded an unabashed affirmation. "All of that. I guess I behaved pretty badly; I don't pretend to be proud of my record."

"Nor ashamed!" she commented bitterly.

"Wel-l . . . I *am* ashamed, whether you believe it or not. I've been a pretty bad lot, but . . . but I'm tired of it, Kate, tired of feeding on husks." His tone lacked wholly any trace of sincerity, though he strove to render it otherwise. "I've come back to turn over a new leaf; and you're not going to be hard on me, are you? It isn't as if I expected fatted calf to begin with, but I've made up my mind to deserve it in the end. You'll help some; you're worth living straight for."

She was aware of his stare, insolent with the lust of ownership, and shuddered, darting swift, fearful glances past him to the door.

"You *won't* understand," she declared. "I cannot. . . . You killed my love for you, John, when—when you showed me, plainly, crudely, that you had married me not because you loved me, but because—because you wanted me, and," she panted, cheeks burning beneath the gray of her lowered hat-brim—"and marriage was the only way."

"So!" he commented, with a hint of such acute penetration that she quaked with fear only too well founded. "I begin to see. . . . So you married again?"

Her frightened "Yes" was all but inaudible. She sank back in the chair. He laughed shortly. And through a lengthening pause the two regarded each other, she cringing, with eyes that voiced the anguish of her soul, he calmly, eyes cold and discriminative, thin, straight lips shaped in a shadowy sneer.

Ultimately her helpless passivity forced upon him the initiative. "And that's why you were so delighted to see me! That's the why of this expensive get-up of yours! . . . Must be pretty comfortably fixed to keep you in this style. I think I understand, Kate: his circumstances are a little better than plain John Rideout's, whom you married when neither of us had a penny to bless ourselves with. . . . Sort of an Enoch Arden business, this; and I suppose you count on my playing the game according to Tennyson—what? . . . Well, I don't believe I'll interfere—much."

The final word was uttered beneath his breath; and had he been another man he had shrunk with shame before the joy that suffused her countenance.

"John!" she cried brokenly.

"Steady, Kate! You don't want the whole establishment to get onto your fix, do you? I said 'much': guess you didn't hear. I won't interfere *much*. Is that plain enough? . . . Any children?" he demanded so quickly that he startled from her the whispered admission: "One."

"Boy? . . . That does tie you up pretty tight. I guess you care a lot for 'em both—what? More than you ever did for poverty-stricken John Rideout, I bet. But you needn't go all to pieces, Kate. It can be arranged if—he sets as much store by you as he ought to. You're worth a lot—woman like you. I guess we can fix it, he and I."

"You—you must not! Please—I!"

"No? And why not? These things happen every day, and no one blames the woman. Only to be spared publicity—"

"But he doesn't know!" she managed to tell him.

"Doesn't know what? That you thought yourself a widow when you married him? Ah! you kept it quiet—never let on to a soul, eh? Because you were ashamed to be known as the widow of John Rideout! . . . That makes it harder for you; you'll have to stand the gaff instead of What's-his-

name. By the way, what is his name?"

"I—I shall not tell!"

"I'll stick to you like a leech till I find out."

His manner had grown dangerous, but her spirit flamed irrational defiance. "You shall never know!" she declared with guarded vehemence. "Never . . ."

And there rang, shrill above the murmur of voices and shuffle of feet interpenetrated by gusts of melody from the distant orchestra, the cry of a page—an atom of humanity, an insignificant tool of Destiny, wandering listlessly through the public rooms of the hotel and at intervals opening his mouth to emit a languid yelp: "Missis Duhamel!"

The woman could not restrain a movement of dismay, and the man's keen eyes pounced mercilessly upon her betrayal.

"Duhamel? Not so commonplace I'm liable to forget—"

"No, no!" she panted. "It is not—"

He laughed, brusquely, incredulously. "Yes, yes; but it is!" And lifted a finger to the boy, who, catching the signal, turned and drifted toward them.

"This is Mrs. Duhamel," indicated the man—superfluously, for the child knew her. She had denied her own identity otherwise—had she not, looking up, read recognition in his countenance.

"Mister Duhamel wants yeh on the 'phone, ma'am."

"Yes. . . . Thank you."

The page effaced himself. The woman rose, and Rideout with her, meeting her look of pitiful appeal with a hard, unyielding face.

"No, my dear," he informed her with finality. "I'll come along and see that you don't get away before we've—ah—arranged matters." And he stood aside with mocking courtesy to let her precede him—relentless, masterful in his advantage, determined to the point of brutality.

He fell in at her elbow; and in such wise they progressed into the lobby,

where Rideout quietly placed himself by the desk, whence he commanded an uninterrupted view of the telephone switchboard. But not of the booths: something which the woman comprehended with a wave of hope when at the operator's indifferent "Number Three" she turned a corner to find the booths aligned against one wall of a corridor extending the depth of the building, and realized that this was the Broadway side, that only the café separated her from the street and liberty—from freedom to think, to plan and contrive, to piece together (if by taking thought that were possible) the scattered elements of life, to rebuild with frail tremulous hands the tumbled house of cards that had been the palace of her happiness. . . .

She slipped into the booth, shutting the sound-proof door; and her husband's—Duhamel's voice was in her ears, pleading his excuses for having kept her waiting as well as for being unable to join her at all. A business matter of pressing moment had intervened; he might even be obliged to run in to town again after dinner. . . .

She scarcely comprehended, for the clamor of her thoughts, though she hung upon the echo of his words, picturing to herself the busy man seated by the cluttered desk, the tender, kindly light illumining his eyes, as he talked into the telephone, that was always there when he thought of or addressed her, his wife; seeing the man, father of her child, to whom every fiber of her being and her very soul owed loyalty and love and gratitude. . . . She made her responses mechanically, the while revolving her desperate and essential stratagem. "Are you through?"

She woke with a cry of apprehension, Duhamel had long since concluded. "Yes," she said in haste; "but I want another number." In confusion she strung together a jumble of numbers. So, and so only, might she postpone the inevitable; should Rideout, overlooking the switchboard, see the operator remove the plug, and should she not immediately thereafter appear, he would

fathom her ruse, perhaps in time to frustrate it.

Stealthily she opened the door and stepped out, glancing up and down the corridor, which was for the instant untenanted. A few paces down, to the left, swung the wicker café-door. She did not hesitate. For a breath she was fleeing through a garish place hazy with smoke, through which wondering pink faces of men were turned toward her from the rank along the bar. And then the light of broad day smote her vision like a blow and she halted, dazed and at a loss, experiencing a sensation as of having escaped from some gloomy purlieu of purgatory. . . .

An adventitious hansom stood at the curb; the driver, catching her eye, touched his hat and lifted the reins hopefully. It seemed as if the ruth of Providence had been extended to her.

"Drive," she told the man from the step, "drive anywhere—up through the Park!"

"Very good, m'm."

"And drive fast, please!"

"Cert'n'y, m'm."

She dropped upon the cushions with a little low cry; Rideout had appeared in the café entrance. Their glances clashed. Already the cab was moving, but the man took a step or two, contemplating pursuit; then mysteriously changed his mind, and halted.

Until the traffic shut him from sight the woman, looking back, saw him standing there watching her; the ghost of a malicious smile shading his hard mouth, his restless eyes brooding, inscrutable—more terrifying in his passive acceptance of the situation than he had been even in active resentment.

And she was shaken with fear to the depths of her soul.

II

A sigh, in its inception nothing more but ending in a sob half-strangled, broke upon the quiet bosom of the breathless black hour; and as if the sound in its infinite dreariness had proved potent to lift the spell of for-

lorn agony which had clogged her being, mental and physical alike, ever since she had laid herself down, the woman stirred and turned upon her pillow, hot aching eyes staring wide in the absolute darkness.

On the floor below a clock chimed the quarter-hour, fifteen minutes to eleven. Its sonorous echo faded, singing into the stillness. Thereafter silence—the uncanny soundless hush of a windless night in the country. The woman felt that she would welcome any sound that stood for human company. But she heard none. The house itself seemed to sleep profoundly; within its walls she only was awake, and alone, fearfully alone with her passion. The pillow beside her was vacant; Duhamel, absorbed in a business crisis, had returned to the city as soon as he had dined. In the adjoining room their son slept the motionless, heavy sleep of childhood. Upstairs the maids had been in bed an hour or more. In the stable at the back of the grounds, a hundred yards removed from the kitchen-door, the coachman kept vigil, waiting to drive to the depot and bring his employer back from the midnight train.

And her loneliness was heavy upon her, who lay sleepless and distraught, a thousand times rehearsing the poignant emotions of a day that had dawned upon her a happy wife, a devoted mother, a contented woman, that had left her a worn, racked, hunted creature, who in giving birth had wronged the child who worshiped her, in marrying had wronged the man who loved and honored her, who was outcast in her own esteem, disprized of all that she held dear—of even her good name—who cowered abjectly before the fear of discovery and exposure.

What folly, what bitter and insensate, irreparable folly, that she had not told David, her husband (for her soul owned none other than Duhamel), that pitiful chapter of her youth ere she had consented to marry him! For even when hiding it from him she had not doubted the strength of his love to endure the ordeal of confession. Not for

that reason had she kept her counsel, but for sheer shame—illogical, ingenuous shame, prohibiting her avowal of the error into which she had been led by an over-generous, over-credulous girl's heart, and which had resulted in the yoking of her love and trust to egoism, impure, unworthy, false and cruel. A union sanctioned both by church and state, the clandestine marriage had saved her the censure of a censorious people; in her own sight alone it had left her sullied, a thing that had been used for a time, then cast aside, at its proprietor's whim. And so slight had seemed the negative deception, so harmless the suppression of a secret that the grave had closed upon; and now it was grown so great, so monstrous and merciless, menacing her with the living death of exile from her home. . . .

Thus through long hours her poor, tormented thoughts had beaten wildly against the implacable walls of damning circumstance, seeking in vain to read the answer to the riddle of her present estate, afraid to recognize that answer in the dark and awful shape in which most often it appeared to her. . . .

Of a sudden she found herself standing in the middle of the floor, without clear conception of how she had come there or of what had happened to frighten her out of bed, knowing no more than that from the floor below a strange sound had come. Whether it had been a voice, the scrape of chair-legs on a hardwood floor or the raising of a window-sash, or what, she could not say; nor more than that it had been a noise in the night, at a time when there should be no noise in that house, standing as it did so far back in its ample grounds, blocks distant from the trolley line whose melancholy whine ordinarily alone disturbed the peace of the suburban village after nine in the evening.

She listened, hearing nothing for a time, until again she fancied that something creaked—like a door stealthily opened. . . . Startled into momentary forgetfulness, she almost welcomed the interruption, ominous as it

might have loomed at another time, and in an instant was struggling into a negligée, girdling it about her, thrusting her feet into house-slippers and bethinking her of the corner in the bedside cabinet where Duhamel kept a revolver.

A moment later, weapon in hand, she was creeping down the broad staircase as noiselessly as a pale and timid ghost, tense-strung nerves quivering, heart hammering so madly that she wondered whether she could hear another sound above its thumping. At the bottom, pausing in the hall whose darkness was moderated by a glimmer of light from the lamp in the vestibule, she again stood attentive upon the least untoward circumstance. Then, abruptly, her groping fingers chancing upon the electric-switch on the wall, the hall was drenched with clear and brilliant light. . . . Nothing!

But the drawing-room? She sped with eager feet to its threshold, where again she pressed the switch, causing light to leap sword-like from the ceiling—only to show her the room was as it should be: empty but for its furnishing. Beyond lay only the library, a deep, wide room occupying the entire ground floor of one wing of the house, with a single entrance—the drawing-room door—which stood ajar: properly, since she had left it so. Her gaze, probing its darkness, encountered—darkness only.

A crinkle showed between her intent brows; unto that moment she had been oddly numb to fear, but now she hung poised in doubt and trembling, at once fascinated and repelled by that dark portal. While she hesitated, sharp and strident in the silence pealed the summons of the telephone—from the library!

She was startled, but the noise decided her; she forgot her apprehensions. David was calling her from New York and—and she cared for nothing, so that she might hear his voice. For coincident with the remainder of him came the recurrence of her heartache, an anguish which only the assurance of his love might lessen.

At once she swept through the drawing-room, pausing in the doorway to the library to turn on the light.

The chandelier had been disconnected; only the reading-lamp shone responsive to the current, its mellow light falling from beneath its ruby shade bright upon the book-littered centretable, merging gently with the shadows round the walls, gleaming upon the fire-brasses and the nicked telephone instrument, glowing dull upon old mahogany, Cordovan leather, and the long velvet folds of the heavy portières that hid the windows.

Mrs. Duhamel had but a single comprehensive glance for the somberly familiar scene. The room was in order. In the grate a bed of coals was smoldering; the little flickering jets of flame that danced above it cast curious lights and shadows on the tall Japanese screen on the further side of the fireplace, causing its gold-embroidered dragons to squirm and move. But all else was still and undisturbed.

. . . Her imagination must have magnified the romping of a mouse in the wainscoting. . . . The bell rang again, and she pulled the door to behind her, lest her son or the maids should be awakened by the clamor, and went straightway toward the little desk in the nearer angle of the fireplace on which rested the telephone.

Midway she paused affrighted. The portières over the bow-window at the end of the room were shaking. Before she could turn they were torn aside. Into the lighted room stepped a man, deliberately and with composure.

Rideout! . . . For the space of thirty pulse-beats the woman swayed, dumb with terror, her face the color of ashes and devoid of any vestige of expression. The man moved steadily, purposefully, toward her, cold eyes watchful of her hand that unwittingly retained its grasp upon the revolver. In the interval the bell shrieked; neither heeded it.

Presently, shaking with uncontrollable panic, the woman reeled to the table, catching its edge for support.

Rideout sprang forward as if to catch her in his arms were she to fall, and with an indescribably quick and crafty gesture of one arm, seized and wrenched the weapon from her unresisting fingers. Its capture seemed to relieve his mind. Laughing softly, he stood away.

"Thanks," he said blandly, "you had me scared for a bit. I see you'd discounted my call, Kate."

But she only eyed him, despair written large upon her features. A minute elapsed, punctuated methodically by the insistent bell, and concluded by Rideout.

"Come!" he ordered, with a show of anger. "You're not to faint, d'you understand? Stop this nonsense, Kate. Pull yourself together and answer that call before it brings the house about our ears."

Swayed by suggestion more than by volition, she started to obey him, but as she seated herself by the instrument Rideout caught her wrist in a grip so harsh that it wrung from her a cry of pain, and with pain there came to her a plainer understanding of the situation.

"Who is that?"

"Let me go!" She tugged away. "You hurt . . ."

"Who's that?" He gave her arm a brutal wrench.

"Ah-h! . . . I don't know! . . . My husband, I think! . . . Please!"

"Duhamel, you mean?" He released her and chuckled grimly. "Well, you answer him and—possibly he'd like to know who's here."

She nodded, her lip trembling, her eyes filling with tears. It was true; she was at his mercy. He dared her to tell, to call for help, and she dared not. . . . A series of short, imperative thrills of the bell educes from the man a movement of exasperation.

"Do you hear? Answer him!"

Lips steady with resolve, she turned to the telephone and lifted the receiver to her ear. "Yes? What is it?"

Central's stolid voice parroted the number, then told her to "go ahead." And instantly Duhamel's accents bridged the vastness of the night.

"That you, Kitty? What's the matter, dear?"

Dear! He never forgot, never wearied of that verbal caress! . . . She trembled, controlling her tones by strength of will alone.

"It is I, David. The—the door was closed, and I didn't hear, I presume."

"You're all right, then? Nothing wrong?"

The anxiety in his voice was like a balm to her aching heart.

"Nothing, David."

"Well—I've been ringing fifteen minutes," with native masculine exaggeration. "Tell Jim to drive down for me, will you, please? I got away sooner than I hoped to—just got in and there's not a hack in sight."

A pause followed. Appalled, she struggled to overcome her weakness, to rowel her wits until they should contrive an expedient to detain him, to get Rideout away before he returned, to save herself, if only for another day . . . Her hand tightened upon the edge of the table until her fingers were sore with the strain.

"Hello, hello! What's the matter? Don't you hear——?"

"Yes. . . . You—you're at the station?"

"Yes. Didn't you understand? Send Jim down——"

"I will, at once, David."

"Look here, Kitty, you're sure there's nothing wrong?"

"Quite sure, dearest."

"I don't like the sound of your voice; it isn't natural. The boy's not sick, is he?"

"No—nothing is wrong, dear. I will send James at once."

"Well, tell him to hustle. I want to get home and see for myself . . ."

"Don't worry, sweetheart."

"All right, but . . . Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

Rideout, bending over her shoulder, lifted the receiver from her fingers and replaced it firmly in the hook. "That'll be about all for David," he said. "What'd he want?"

"The carriage. I'm to call up the

stable. He will be here in twenty minutes."

"He'll have to walk, then. You're not going to call up any stable tonight." Rideout's words were accompanied by the striking of the tall corner clock. It was eleven.

Mrs. Duhamel rose so suddenly that the man fell back a pace, hands vigilant to guard against an assault which she did not contemplate. Contempt quivered in the line of her nostrils as she faced him quietly, brave with the courage and pale with the pallor bred of desperation.

"If the carriage does not go, he will get a public hack. . . . What do you want? Tell me and go! What is it you want?"

"To finish our talk, my dear." He recovered quickly, whether his distrust of her had been real or counterfeit. "You ran away too soon, to-day; to that false step," he sneered, "you 'owe this honor.'"

"What do you want? My husband——"

Rideout's eyes hardened. "Your husband," he snapped, "is here. Don't forget that. If Duhamel wants an introduction, I'm sure I don't mind. I'm ready for him . . . even if he turns hasty." He tapped the pocket wherein he had dropped the revolver, and slouched upon the centretable, long legs swinging. "It's time we came to a settlement; and I dare say it will be more satisfactory to me if Duhamel's present."

The woman began to pace up and down between him and the mantel, fighting down the creeping horror of hysteria that palpitated in her breast. Rideout chuckled callously, watching her vigilantly.

"You see," he drawled, with malice, "your little game didn't work. All I had to do was to look Duhamel up in the telephone directory and call up his office. 'David' employs an obliging clerk-person, who told me this address, and that 'David' wouldn't be at home tonight, as well. . . . So I thought I'd have a look at the establishment; it shows for money, all

right. Thoughtful of you to leave the window open for me, though."

Mrs. Duhamel paused. "The window? It was locked," she asserted vacantly.

"Not when I came in. Careless servants!" Rideout's eyes traveled to the clock. "But you'd better get busy, Katherine. Here's five minutes nearly gone. . . ."

With a gasp she lifted her hands and let them fall, hopelessly, then for a long moment contemplated the man steadfastly. He returned her look with cheerful effrontery. At length, with a piteous shake of her head, "John," she begged wearily, "what is it you want? You have robbed me of my peace of mind, my happiness; what more do you require of me?"

"One thing or another." He bent forward, elbows on knees, a suave smile on his saturnine face. "One thing or another. You or . . . money."

"I have no money that is mine to give you. You left me penniless; I managed to support myself for three years, but I was penniless when I married my husband—David."

"'David,' " he mocked with relish, "has plenty, if you haven't. He ought to come down handsomely for you. If I wasn't hard up, I'm damned if I'd let you go. . . . But I'll take my price and disappear. Then you can easily arrange a quiet divorce from me, and a quieter remarriage."

She lifted both hands to her temples and held them there, as if thinking by their pressure to coerce the unruly riot of her thoughts. "You don't understand," she said thickly, "that he must not know. I daren't tell him: he would never trust me again. And I love him."

"On the contrary, I understand perfectly. You haven't by any chance forgotten the newspaper value of the scandal, either, have you? 'Wife of Prominent Banker a Bigamist!'——"

"You will drive me mad," she said very slowly. Her hands fell with the fluttering motion of small, white, stricken things.

"And because of all this," he continued without mercy, "you will have to deal with me under the rose."

"I have told you——"

"To be sure you have. But if you can't wheedle enough out of your precious David to keep me running, from time to time, you're not the woman you look. But you'll find it easier to stave me off for good and all with a lump sum, something heavy." And he anticipated her objection with a query: "I don't suppose David's kept you without jewelry? Seems to me you were wearing an expensive brooch at your throat, this afternoon; and I saw rings under your gloves. What's become of them?"

"How could I explain——?"

"I leave that to you. Where are they?"

"I . . . In the safe." Instinctively her eyes wavered toward the steel door that showed embedded in the wall opposite the fireplace.

Rideout followed her glance. "Ah!" he commented; and licked his lips. "You know the combination, of course?"

"No."

"That's a lie, Kate. Either you know it or you know where to get it. . . . More than ten minutes gone. You'd better hurry."

She bowed her head, considering. James had not gone with the carriage. David would become impatient. It was a certainty that he would not have long to wait for a hack; nor would he hesitate to take it, for she had been unable to curb her emotion when speaking, and he had been patently worried. Every second was precious. . . . She grasped at a flying hope, frantically. "But he will never believe! . . ."

"He'll have to believe what I've got to show him." Rideout showed his teeth in a complacent grin.

"What——?" Her voice broke and she began to tremble violently. What new, what fiend's artifice, would he now discover? He was immovable, his position impregnable. What could she do?

"Why, just for luck, I took the trouble to get a copy of our marriage entry in the County Clerk's office, up home—signed, sealed, and attested."

So she had feared. Yet, "I do not believe you," she said. "That is not true. Why should you——?"

"Oh, I don't know why—second-sight, if you want to call it that. I just thought it might come handy."

"I don't believe you," she iterated monotonously, with dry lips and a burning throat.

"I'll show you," he bragged, knowing that he had sapped the very foundations of her strength, believing her too weak for further resistance; and flaunted in her face a folded paper from his breast-pocket. "There it is, my lady—under a notary's seal, sworn to before witnesses. . . .

Now, see here, I'll give you this," he volunteered with an air of fairness—"I'll hand this over and you can do what you please with it, when you've opened that safe."

She said nothing. A low cunning was fermenting in her mind, and she watched his face with eyes as soulless as his own. Whether or not he told the truth, that paper she must have. . . .

"Will you?" he persisted, misreading her in the spirit of anticipated victory. "And I'll never——"

"No!" she cried passionately. "No!"

With the swiftness of thought her slender white arm shot out from the loose sleeve of her dressing-gown; her fingers closed upon and tore the paper from his grasp. With an oath of rage he slid from the table; but as before she had been too quick for him; already the paper was smoking on the coals.

His face darkened and the light of anger flared in his eyes. She stood between him and the grate. He sprang upon her, gripping her shoulders with brutal hands and swinging her bodily out of his way. But in that instant her hearing, keyed to three-fold acuteness by her agony of dread, had caught the dull, distant rumble of hoofs.

Duhamel was on his way; in two minutes . . .

Frenzied, she threw herself upon the man, winding her limbs about his, hampering his movements, clinging to him with the tenacity of a maddened animal. And for a little he fought impotently to throw her off, his hard, strong hands bruising the tender flesh of her arms and shoulders, his enraged and congested face so close to hers that her soul sickened with disgust. . . . Then suddenly he yielded, as the paper caught in flame and burned brightly, crackling; and yielding, passed an arm around her waist and drew her closely to him.

"You little cat!" he cried in a vibrating tone. "You fooled me there, but, by the Lord, I'll make you pay for it!"

The clatter of hoofs had grown louder, and to it now was added the under-note of rolling wheels. The woman, for a breath a limp weight in his arms, began to struggle to get away.

"Let me go! Oh, let me go!" she pleaded wildly. "He will be here in another moment! Let me go!"

Her voice rose to a low wail, and broke. Rideout laughed brutally, his hot breath in her face. "You'll pay for it," he told her again—"pay for it, my lady. Let him come, then. When he does he'll find you in my arms, where by rights you belong—in my arms, Kate, kissing me as a wife should who's just regained her husband."

He bent his head without warning and put his mouth to hers. She jerked away, sobbing in a choking, smothered fashion; and his lips slid like fire across her cheek. And then an insane sort of strength seemed to enter into her; she fought him with the fury of a demoniac, turning and twisting in his embrace, thrusting him from her with arms that seemed like steel. He was staggered and thrown from his balance. He reeled, cursing, to the other end of the table, perforce releasing her.

She stumbled and fell, clutching the air, against the screen on which the dragons squirmed and fought in the firelight. It went over with a crash, across the fender and fire-dogs.

Rideout pulled himself up with an oath of astonishment. The woman, huddled on her knees, saw his hand go to his pocket. Something—a shadow—the figure of a man—an eavesdropper—who had skulked in hiding behind the screen, leaped between her and Rideout and tried to pass him.

But Rideout was in the way, and perhaps confused. He shouted something inarticulate—possibly a command to halt. Simultaneously the woman saw her revolver appear in his grasp.

The other man dropped snarling to his knees. Rideout fired at him, and almost in the same instant the house-breaker thrust his hand up sharply toward his adversary's breast; not two feet away from it his revolver exploded, and he sprang lightly backward, rising to his height.

In the closed room the shots detonated heavily, with an interval between so minute as to make them ring as one. A drift of stifling, pungent smoke swept across the woman's face. It rose; and she saw clearly the murderer poised lightly above her, watching his victim with cat-like concentration.

Her gaze veered to Rideout. He was swaying, a hand slipping along the surface of the table, Duhamel's weapon falling from the relaxing fingers of the other. Quite suddenly his head dropped upon his chest; his legs doubled laxly under him; he crashed to the floor—and was still.

Then, thinned by distance, she heard a shout, a cry that shocked her into a state wherein she seemed possessed of an extraordinary lucidity of thought. A hundred considerations, doubts, fears, impulses, incentives, crowded upon her; her mind assorted them with rapidity, accepting, rejecting. Withal she was conscious of the nearing sounds of flying gravel and crunching wheels on the driveway through the grounds, as well as of the eyes of the murderer staring somewhat stupidly into her own, over the edge of the silk handkerchief, which, drawn across the bridge of his nose and knotted at the

back of the head, fell over his face in masking folds.

He seemed momentarily witless, dumfounded and transfixed by the sudden and tragic culmination of his lawless incursion into the house. The terror of the electric chair enchained his reason and his limbs, who had come only to thief, had stayed unwillingly to eavesdrop, had killed only as a last resort. To her fell the task of rousing him, abetting his escape, and so saving herself.

"Go!" she cried, flinging an arm toward the bow-window. "Go—go quickly! My husband——"

She had no need to say more; her warning had electrified him. Swinging, he sped noiselessly to the window. The hangings parted and closed behind him, the lamplight quivering in long glistening lines down their blood-red velvet folds. The window-sash creaked; and she was alone with the dead.

Already, indeed, she was kneeling at Rideout's side, a hand above his heart. There was no motion. As the front door slammed with a crash like thunder, she arose, her face wonderfully illumined. . . . It was true, true that he was dead, true that the grave of her past which for a day had yielded him up to terrorize her, had closed a second time—and now forever—upon its prey.

She drew a hand across her eyes. . . . Now all the sweetness of life could be saved and made secure forever, not only

for herself but for the man she loved—the lingering tenderness of love-lit years, the calm, unbroken happiness that walks hand-in-hand with plighted faith and trust unswerving. It might be saved; there was required of her only the essential lie.

She strove to nerve herself to tell it. Footsteps were sounding in the hall At her feet, an inch beyond the dead man's fingers, lay Duhamel's revolver. She stooped quickly and picked it up.

The door was thrown open and Duhamel dashed into the room, panting, racked with anxiety. He halted. His wife was moving slowly toward him, leaning heavily upon the table; and her face gleamed out of the shadow set and white as a marble mask.

"Kitty! In the name of God! . . ."

With something of the spasmodic action of a clockwork puppet she stopped, tottering, and threw the revolver from her. "David," she cried in a toneless voice torn by gusty, terrible, racking sobs, "David, I have . . . I have shot . . . I have killed a . . . a burglar, David!"

She concluded with a little low cry; for Duhamel had come to her, his arms were strong about her, holding her fast, and though the darkness was closing swiftly down upon her consciousness, she knew that, however heavy the price, she had purchased for her beloved peace.



APPROACH

By Margaret Sherwood

MANY the gates that guard the Holy Place
Whereby the well-beloved may enter in;
The Gate of Sorrow opens on His Face;
The Gate of Joy: the iron Gate of Sin.

CONCERNING THE GOVERNESS

By Cecil Carlisle Pangman

WHEN my friend, Archibald Colquhoun, married Caroline Catesby he did me the greatest service in the world. He thereby saved me from marrying her myself. During the first few months of their engagement I hated him bitterly, but assisted him at his wedding with dawning equanimity. The end of the first year found me reconciled, the second complacent, the third thankful, and an ever-increasing thankfulness has been my lot through the remaining seven up to the present.

She is, of course, a most estimable woman and takes the greatest care of Archie, who loves her dearly—so, also, did I once—but she insisted at the very outset upon the stupendous hyphenated combination of Catesby-Colquhoun, which is only one degree less odious than Catesby-Cruddock. Such an action on her part could never have been anticipated, which shows how little a man really knows of the woman he marries, until it is too late. The narrowness of my escape wrecked my nerve for some time afterward, so that I have walked circumspectly ever since, and, even yet, I know Caroline regards me with exasperation as one unduly wary. But in such matters, I hold, the ounce of prevention is worth several tons of cure—if, indeed, there be any cure possible.

My continued idleness, for another thing, has long been as a stumbling-block and a rock of offense to her, and she has struggled both in season and out of season, with a persistence worthy of a better cause, for my regeneration in the tenets and dogmas of her time and class.

"But my dear Caroline," I pleaded, "I cannot beg—to work I am ashamed. My forebears did both, and I reap the reward of their diligence in laborings and solicitations, as evidence that I chose my parents well and wisely. I have a sufficiency, and whosoever seeks to transform a sufficiency into a superfluity must necessarily steal from someone else's mere sufficiency, or even less, for there is not enough to go round, and is, I think, greedy. And I don't intend to be greedy, Caroline."

Such sentiments were, of course, the rankest heresy and schism avowed before the high altar of the creed; iconoclasm rampant in the very holy of holies; for, faithful to her upbringing, she had insisted upon Archie's continuing to pile superfluity upon superfluity, and she sprang to the defense of her flouted idols. Then she somewhat resembled her mother, known to an older generation as "Lodore," because she reminded one of how the waters came down when properly aroused. So I would remove myself hence and swiftly, lest the tale of my iniquities, both of commission and omission, overwhelm me.

One curious thing about the aforementioned multiplication of superfluities was the fact that it never seemed to properly supply the Catesby-Colquhouns with adequate domestic assistance, particularly in the country, and very few visitors to "The Reefs," casual or regular, escaped being saddled with some trifling commission or errand by Caroline—such as taking a telegram, perhaps, to the village on their way to the train, or a box to the station, or bringing out something in unsightly

paper parcels from the city, because the express people were so very careless, you know. Her neighbors, of whom I was one, usually side-stepped, but sometimes toll was levied even upon us. It was simply a peculiarity of Caroline's, and we all made allowance accordingly, accepting our tasks with becoming meekness. It was not through any lack of servants, only that they didn't happen to be around at the moment, or were busy somewhere else, or were sick, sore or sorrowing, and Caroline, certainly, was very good to them.

When, therefore, I turned my car into her gates one morning and drew up before the house, casting a roving eye across the lawns to see where my particular pals, the children, were, I was not at all surprised to have her rush out frantically on me from her sitting-room and call from the veranda:

"Oh, James! James! Good morning! Such a perfect godsend as you are! I am in such trouble!"

"Mornin', Caroline," I called cheerfully, backing away. "Ah! there are the kiddies! Came in to see 'em for a moment only, and find out if the plumber fixed up Greta all right."

"Plumber! What plumber for Greta?" she asked excitedly, her attention successfully diverted from myself.

I was sparring for time as I endeavored to turn my car around.

"Oh, judging from what I saw her eat on the beach yesterday afternoon, I thought the plumber about the only professional person who could help. He would have to take her to pieces and——"

I almost succeeded in achieving a masterly retreat across the garden, from the farther side of which drifted sounds betokening "the stir and trouble of disastrous fight," where I had suddenly spied two small white figures groveling at full length under some tall rhubarb leaves, while a frantic nursemaid haled first one and then the other forth, losing the one to hold the other and *vice versa*, as they struggled to continue their fascinating game;

but Caroline, by a brilliant flank movement, surrounded me and I capitulated.

"Oh, James! I never know when you're in earnest or not. But you've got to help me, really. It's providential, your turning up at this moment, for I was simply at my wits' end."

"Well, all right," I replied rather ungraciously; "only, I tell you to start with, I will not bring home that calf for the children I heard Archie promise them the other day, so you needn't ask me. It's degrading to my car, to say the very least; and I must draw the line there."

"You needn't be afraid," Caroline retorted, with a show of color. "That's Archie's own affair. It's something much more important than that." And from her agitated manner I caught a vague hint of the roar and thunder of a world falling to pieces about her ears.

"What is it I am to do to save the situation, then?" I asked, faintly apologetic. "Something fairly simple, I hope. 'Merely an earth to cleave; a sea to part.'"

"Oh, yes! And there's no time to waste—not a moment. You see, I've engaged a new governess to come down and try to do something with Trevor and Greta. Miss Addison, who has been with the Kendricks for two years—a real English governess and so successful with children. Really, I'm beyond all patience with those two. Oh, that fool girl!"

The nurse had lost both her charges and they had now disappeared completely. Their devious progress, *ventre à terre*, could be followed by the agitation of the rhubarb leaves, while their agonized keeper danced fretfully on the outskirts of the patch, alternately adjuring and entreating them to come out.

"I'll be sorry for any governess who has to do with those two," I remarked, grinning, "particularly an English one. If it's in connection with her that you want to enlist my services, I refuse. I'll be no party to delivering some poor, gentle, unsuspecting girl into those young ruffians' hands. It will simply

be a modern rendering of 'The Christians to the Lions.'"

Caroline calmly ignored the slight upon her offspring. Once she has made up her mind to a thing, she travels in a straighter line thereto than any man, woman or child I ever knew. You can't lay any false scent for her.

"Yes—I want you for just that. She is coming down from town this morning; in fact, she will be arriving very soon, I should think," glancing at her watch. "The train is due at 12.45, and it's almost that now. Then, such a series of mishaps! Archie dismissed the under-groom yesterday for pilfering, and sent him packing; and Farron fell from a ladder in the stable this morning and strained his back, and has had to go to bed. I can't trust either of the gardeners with the horses, and Archie chose today, of all days, to go to town in his motor, and only he and the chauffeur understand anything of the new runabout. I'm terrified of the thing. Besides——"

"So you want me to go down and fetch her?" I hazarded, breaking in upon the recital of the cataclysmic series of accidents which had disrupted her household.

"Oh, and the telephone is out of order and I can't get anyone in Holtsville to harness up and go down for her. I told her to get off at Woodside station because it is so much nearer, but there is no one in charge there to give her any directions, and most probably, too, no one else will get off this train and she will be absolutely lost. If I had let her go on to Holtsville it would have been all right, but I never fancied for a moment I shouldn't be able to send for her. She's a perfect stranger to this part of the country, of course, and these English governesses are apt to be so particular, she may become annoyed at what looks like carelessness or neglect on my part, and go straight back to the city again on the very next train. And what's more, I'm so afraid of those Harling people. Mrs. Harling, I know, has been counting on getting her, only I just succeeded in slipping in ahead of her. The Kendricks have been

called abroad very suddenly, and may be away some time, and Miss Addison, the governess, refused to accompany them and I engaged her by wire as soon as I heard of it. It seems cruel I should have all this trouble and anxiety now, after being so afraid I was going to lose her. And I'm just terrified, too, that some of the Harling people may be at the station, or may see her on the train or know about her coming here, and Mrs. Harling would hesitate at nothing, I feel sure, to get her away from me. And, of course, if Miss Addison isn't met and has to wait for any length of time, she might easily get angry enough to throw me over and go to Mrs. Harling. Now, there's a dear fellow; if you'll hurry you'll almost get to the station in time. Don't waste a minute!"

Her victim safely secured and the necessary instructions given, all further interest in me ceased, and she forthwith hurried away into the house, leaving me sitting in my car blighted and apprehensive. I had done many a service for Caroline in the past, but this was somewhat less to my taste than any previous commission; meeting a strange woman of whom I had never heard before, whom I had never seen, and of whom I had not even a description. Of course, she might turn out to be the only person at Woodside station that morning, which would, at least, simplify identification, if she hadn't already been kidnapped by those rapacious Harlings. I drew a sudden secret comfort from the last thought. But here Caroline's head emerging from a window upstairs warned me to depart on my quest without any further delay, for with Caroline you could neither argue nor refuse—she gave orders. So, sulkily enough, I headed my car down the avenue and turned into the road at 12.45 to the minute, at which time the train was due, and I had all of five miles to cover on anything but good roads at that.

Caroline's spell of ill-luck that morning must have been infectious, and I had become inoculated while I tarried

with her before the gate. My car proved strangely intractable and balky beyond any previous experience, just because I was in a hurry, which necessitated several heated arguments with the same, supported by a tool-box. When at length I did get it traveling smoothly I came upon a worthy farmer who had cleverly chosen the narrowest part of the road in which to have his load of hay break down, and, after much time wasted in futile attempts to get past him without overturning in the ditch, and frantic, unsuccessful endeavors to help him clear the way, we parted company mutually reviling one another in no measured terms, and I was forced to turn back and make quite a long detour by another road. This brought me to the station something like two hours over-due, very hot, very hungry and in no gentle frame of mind.

Woodside station was nothing but a small board shelter and a strip of platform planted in a clearing for the convenience of a few of the railway magnates, of whom Archie was one, who lived in the vicinity, and who arrogantly objected to the longer drive to the regular station of Holtsville. The road came down steeply to it over the hill and through the wood, and was quiet and deserted—in all its length I met no one. It was the height of scented Midsummer and the woods gloomed on either hand still and cool, but the clearing lay open and naked to the pitiless glare. The sun was beating down fiercely from a fleckless sky of brass as I swung up to the platform, and the boards radiated the heat so that it smote up in my face when I stepped out, and the glittering line of rail, stretching in a long tangent through the wood, wavered and floated in a mirage. The spot was a perfect little inferno, and I fairly gasped for breath in the hot, windless air.

A first hurried inspection of the premises discovered no one about, and the faint stirrings of a hope I had hardly dared to harbor pulsed ever stronger in my breast, at the thought that the governess might have done even as

Caroline had feared—flagged a down train and gone back to the city in disgust. Or, perhaps, the Harlings had succeeded in kidnapping her, after all!

There was no one in the little shelter either, and I was just on the point of giving tongue to my delight in a whoop of relief, when, upon rounding the farther end, I walked into her—or, more strictly speaking, on top of her, almost. She was reclining on a low bench built against the outside of the structure, in the narrow patch of shadow thrown by the angle of the roof, and was fast asleep. At least, so I concluded after a breathless moment or two, in which she made no movement nor took any notice of my appearance, though I had walked up rather noisily. Her hat was very much tilted over her eyes, and I could not see her face; a magazine had fallen from her hand to the grimy boards beneath, and the general abandon of her whole attitude argued nothing less than deep, unconscious slumber.

Now, be it said in this place, that I believe I am a man with a certain amount of assurance; able to cope with most emergencies not outside the general run of those which might happen to one of my time and class, but, in this case, I was frankly puzzled. I couldn't go and waken that woman rudely and bring her up staring and startled in front of me, with her hat all awry and her hair tumbled about her face. It would shock my modesty and would, moreover, very probably, call into being a sudden and vigorous hatred of me in her breast, for forcing such a situation upon her. Women will submit gracefully, if not forgivingly, to many a trying contretemps, but being discovered in an unattractive situation is not one of these. And the most cursory inspection had revealed that she could not be wholly without charm, even though her face was hidden, and I should not like the imputation of boorishness from even the plainest and humblest of her sex. There was something very graceful about her attitude and figure, so lithe and young and unstudied, that was

strangely at variance with my preconceived ideas of what Miss Addison should be.

An inspiration came to me suddenly—glorious and hopeful. I backed away softly and with infinite caution round the corner and fled on tiptoe to my car. I set the engines going in a minute, and their steady throb pulsed loudly through the clearing; then I clasped both hands to the horn and drove through its brazen throat such a succession of terrible blasts as would have waked the very dead as with Archangel Gabriel's trump. In any event, it wakened the echoes and set them rocketing hideously through the sun-steeped woods, jarring their cloistral silence, and a family of startled crows rose scurrying and scolding from the tree-tops near-by. It could not surely fail to have an equally arousing effect upon that unseen, slumbering governess.

I gave her a fair interval of time; what my inexperienced mind thought sufficient, in which to compose and arrange herself, and then I walked briskly up the platform again as though I had just arrived and were making my first inspection of the premises. I even essayed a merry whistle and broke it off short with an excellently simulated air of surprise as she walked around the corner of the shelter carrying a small hand-bag. Only a high flush upon her cheeks was left to prove she had been sleeping as soundly as any of the famous Seven, not more than three minutes ago. I lifted my hat as I came forward.

"Miss—" I began, but got no farther.

"Where have you been?" she said severely, to my entire amazement. "You should have come hours ago, at least! I've been waiting here a very long time!"

She spoke with an English accent, and I felt suddenly and very completely crushed under the rebuking gaze of her angry blue eyes.

"Oh—er—I'm—I'm—awfully sorry," I stammered, scared into a hurried, unpremeditated apology; but I pulled myself up in a glow of resentment.

Why should I apologize, anyway? It hadn't been my fault that I was late. Who was she to praise or blame, without even giving me a chance to explain the circumstances? It was manifestly unfair, and I would preserve my dignity at all costs, but she cut the ground away from beneath me again quite sharply.

"I know! Of course, you're sorry! You've a hundred excuses, I suppose. I don't want to hear them. Here! put this bag in."

"Your other baggage?" I ventured fearfully and meekly, with chastened spirit.

"It has gone on somewhere, or it hasn't come at all, or it's lost—probably lost. It is my usual experience on American railways. Never mind about it now. Hurry home at once! I haven't eaten anything since breakfast, and it's frightfully hot here."

Well, neither had I eaten anything since breakfast, for the matter of that, and again I felt the dull glow of anger at her curt, uncivil treatment of me, but I lacked most lamentably the courage to offer any further defense or excuse. That I was taken aback at her attitude toward me expresses my feelings very mildly. A little impatience, perhaps, I could understand and forgive; it certainly was far too hot for comfort, and a narrow wooden bench could not be the most restful place upon which to undergo two hours' waiting, besieged with the horrors of a gradually increasing hunger and thirst; yet even all these things could hardly serve to explain her severity and her haughty refusal to hear my pathetic story. Besides, it did not come well from a newly engaged governess in the house of one of my friends.

I eyed her slantwise as we walked together down the platform. She was quite young, it struck me, for a governess; they are usually elderly, if not angular, it had always seemed to me, but she had the air of one set up in authority which had so cowed me, and her lack of years evidently meant no corresponding inexperience or want of confidence in herself. Then I was

vouchsafed an illuminating moment. In the twinkling of an eye it flashed upon me. She took me, unmistakably, for Caroline's chauffeur, and was losing no time in showing me my proper place in the domestic scale as compared with hers. Nothing else would explain her attitude at our meeting and her authoritative speech, although it was distinctly uncomplimentary to my appearance, to which I usually devote great care. I would have enjoyed the joke if I hadn't been fretting under the constant humiliation it imposed upon me. Me—besought by Caroline to do her this service, to be thus snubbed and bullied by her children's governess. I was annoyed in several different kinds of ways. A chauffeur—the idea!

I smiled grimly as I helped her to her seat, climbed into my own and sent the car bouncing and jolting over the rough road through the wood. In a very short while she would be brought to a very vivid and probably painful realization of her mistake, and I promised myself, in bitterness of spirit, that I would abate no jot nor tittle of my just revenge upon her for her incivilities, in the confusion which must presently overwhelm her when we arrived at Caroline's and my proper identity and importance were impressed upon her.

We swept down the long shadowed stretch of the woodland road, where the undergrowth brushed softly against the wheels and the leaves whispered under the tires. In the coolness, my troubled spirit was partially soothed and calmed.

We swung round a sudden corner into the main road, clear of the wood, and almost collided with another car turning from it. Both cars checked and shook as the brakes were suddenly jammed. I did not recognize the driver of the other car in the first moment of meeting, but he was staring at us in wide-eyed astonishment, and when he caught his breath shouted something unintelligible. Then I heard the new governess behind me answer briskly, "Mr. Harling! Oh, Mr. Harling!"

Of course it was Harling. He wears

the absurdest sort of linen ephod when motoring, no one could be expected to recognize him, and he had a new car I didn't know.

"Where did you come from, in heaven's name?" he called excitedly, climbing down. "I've been looking everywhere for you. You couldn't——"

A hand was laid suddenly on my shoulder. "Let me get out!" a voice commanded. "Open the door, please!"

What did it mean? What was Harling saying? Why was she demanding to get out? I sat still and dazed a moment, trying to collect my wits. Then I had it! Caroline had openly accused the Harlings of coveting her prize governess. She had feared they might, somehow, snatch the paragon away from her, and had not scrupled to hint they would not be above using any means whatsoever, no matter how despicable, to accomplish their evil purpose. And now, Mr. Harling in desperation had evidently resorted to nothing less than highway robbery and abduction, by stopping me thus on my road, and this brazen hireling was, apparently, willing—and, more than willing, even anxious—to desert, calling peremptorily to me to let her out.

Then revolt, full-armed, sprang in my breast, and my beaten pride took heart and courage again. I would here and now prove my independence, far too long delayed. She would come with me and explain to Caroline what she meant. She would keep her engagement, willy-nilly. She was not going to play fast and loose with her promises in this base fashion. I had not solicited the task of bringing her home to Caroline; I had even hoped and prayed she would fail to turn up at the station, but now that she had appeared and had accepted my pilotage, she would, most certainly, complete her journey with me. My hand had been set to the plow and I would finish the furrow, and home I would bring her, or eat my hat or something equally absurd.

"Sit down!" I thundered over my shoulder. "You can't get out now!" And I started the car moving sharply.

That made her sit down very suddenly, effectively and conclusively, with a most pronounced jerk, and nearly ran over the man Harling. I just scraped by the other car, changed speeds and shot off. I heard an agonized scream from the governess before her breath was quite snatched away, and smiled to myself again at the sweet thought of her complete discomfiture over her failure to desert to Harling. Such bare-faced perfidy I had never known before; in all my experience, I had never heard of such a thing. Were not promises and engagements sacred to these people as to others in all walks of life, however humble? Here she had accepted this position with Caroline and had come down from the city to take it, and then, quite suddenly, thinks she would rather go to the Harlings and attempts to throw Caroline over. She didn't look like one who would deceive and betray, most certainly; but then, how little could one build upon looks these days!

And Harling, too—I never would have believed he could descend to such trickery. It must have been his wife's fault; I never did like her much. To such a pass could matrimony bring a man. Now, if the children proved too much for their new governess, or Caroline dismissed her, well and good—she could go to Mrs. Harling then, or to anyone else, but at least she was not going to desert in this manner if I could help it; and apparently I was helping it very successfully.

Now whatever Mr. Harling may have been—and according to Caroline, both he and his wife must be everything base and contemptible—he was at least a man of spirit, and in a moment he had jumped back into his car and set off in pursuit of me. I had successfully defeated his first openly piratic attack and was wisely fleeing for safety within Caroline's gates, under the shelter of her guns, but he evidently intended to give chase with full sail and overhaul me, if possible.

The race which followed would have put a Vanderbilt Cup winner to open shame. The road was far from good,

but I checked for nothing, bounced and bumped over ridge and hollow, spun round corners, shaved by ditches, until my prisoner's affrighted screams died away to mere gasps; as, with bowed head, she fought for breath under our tearing speed. The country fled back behind us; hedges and fences faded into one dull blur and trees danced swiftly to the rear. And, hanging grimly on our trail, smothered in our dust, was Harling, neither losing nor gaining a foot. Perhaps a couple of hundred yards separated us at the beginning, and so it remained. Our cars must have been of equal power, with drivers of equal skill. I clenched my teeth determinedly; he should not have her. Any check or delay would result in being overhauled; and I prayed fervently for a clear road, but I would never surrender without a struggle. I thought of a certain long-handled spanner in the tool-box and wondered if I could get it out quickly. And so, regardless of speed limits, oblivious of the terrible roll of fines and penalties, we tore along.

Then chance, ever wilful, took a hand in the game. I caught up on two wagons jogging side by side along the road ahead of me, their drivers arguing heatedly. They blocked the way from ditch to ditch. I horned and honked fiercely, peremptorily; then despairingly, pleadingly. They refused to hear the warning; or, if heard, disregarded it. They made no move to turn out and give me the road, and I could not charge them and risk murder. They paid no attention to me as they disputed, throwing their arms wildly about, and, with a wicked word, called up from the depths of bitterness and defeat, I put on the brakes and slowed down, glancing over my shoulder at Harling rapidly coming up abreast of me. He gave a glad shout of triumph as he caught my eye, but exulted too soon, for in his sudden elation, he neglected to watch his car. It swerved suddenly from me, the off fore wheel slid down the bank and the whole car lurched and pitched into the shallow ditch, sending him out over the bonnet

like a rocket. I stopped instantly, fearing he might be injured, but he jumped up in a moment so nimbly I knew he must be all right; his big car was, however, completely *hors de combat*. Assured of his escape, and my first duty being to Caroline, I started off again, victory perching upon my banners. The rest of the way I took more easily, secure from pursuit, and at length reached Caroline's gates and swung up the avenue to her door.

Caroline was standing upon the steps, wild amaze and panic in her eye. I could see it from afar. She had evidently been worrying over our long absence. She held a sheet of yellow paper in her hand, which was unmistakably a telegraph form. I jumped out quickly and sprang up to her. I felt most indecently proud and uplifted, and spared not a glance at the governess huddled in the tonneau, cowed and ashamed.

"Here she is," I called gaily, "though you very nearly lost her, Caroline! The Harlings almost got her!" I turned then and smiled sweetly at my charge; I could afford to be magnanimous and forgiving now, for I was about to taste my revenge.

Caroline tried to speak, but words failed her, grateful emotion doubtless overpowering her. She could only wave the telegram feebly and, at last, motioned me to take and read it. I did.

MRS. CATESBY-COLQUHOUN,

The Reefs, Holtville.

Have finally decided to accompany Mrs. Kendrick to England. Sailed this morning. Sorry to disappoint you. Writing.

MARY ADDISON.

No hint, no presage, no warning of what it contained was vouchsafed me. I read it over helplessly several times before I grasped its full significance. I stood thus, elevated, conspicuous, marked, pilloried, while my shame and undoing came upon me unheralded, and my sudden abasement was the abasement of the nethermost pit itself. It seemed as though years had passed; ages and eons of time had flown over my head, when I finally lifted my eyes from the fatal sheet and looked at the

other two. Caroline was still staring at me in wonderment and the governess or whatever or whoever she was now, was feebly trying to put herself to rights, restore her hairpins and straighten her hat.

"Well—I'm damned!" I heard somebody say very loudly and solemnly. It took me several seconds to realize it was I who had spoken. We all stood like waxworks figures in a tableau, struck into eternal immobility.

"But who is she, then? Who is she? Who have I got here?" I asked helplessly, murmuring to myself. I rubbed my hand across my forehead vacantly, trying to clear the fog from my brain. Surely this was all a dream and I would presently wake up to sanity. But still, there was that strange woman in my car. I could not have dreamed her.

"Who—who are you?" I demanded fiercely, turning on her. "What were you doing at the station? Why did you come with me if you shouldn't have?"

"I didn't—I wouldn't—I mean, I didn't know!" the young person stammered, spurred to some explanation.

"You didn't—you didn't know!" I echoed. "Well, no more did I!"

"It was all a mistake," she murmured.

"And you didn't give me a chance to find out, either," I continued, heedless of her interruption. "I thought she was your governess, of course," I explained, turning to Caroline. Her accusing eye angered me, and my ridiculous position galled my pride cruelly. Caroline was quite evidently prepared to believe any and every iniquity of me—even to the extent of daylight abduction and the flaunting of it unshamedly before her face. I was backed into a tight corner, and I felt I had to fight hard to emerge with one shred of respectability.

"I—I thought she was the governess," I repeated, "and she seemed to expect me, I must say. How was I to know she wasn't your Miss Addison?" I hadn't got every female governess in the country at my finger-tips. I wasn't

supposed to have! "And besides," I went on aggrievedly, "you warned me about Mrs. Harling's anxiety to secure Miss Addison, and that she would try to capture her by any means, didn't you? So, when I met Harling and he called out to her, I thought, of course, that was what he was after, and I just ran for it." Now, what better explanation could sensible people want? I had every right to feel both injured and angry.

My captive in the car below had risen to her feet, trying to attract my attention.

"Do you know Mr. Harling, then?" I asked, turning to her. There was certainly some explanation also due in that quarter.

"Of course I do!" she retorted rather sharply. She felt the absurdity of her position as keenly as I did, and resented my remarks. "I was on my way to stay with Mrs. Harling."

"O Lord!" I ejaculated fervently, and Caroline gasped. "Why, of course—of course! I might have known! You're her cousin, Miss Clare, from England. She told me the other day she was expecting you."

Now, you would have thought from the way in which Caroline had spoken to me of that same Mrs. Harling that she wouldn't condescend to know the creature. It very certainly alters the feminine estimate of a friend if that same friend is suspected of trying to entice your governess away from you. This is, however, quite by the way. The drama was still but half performed; there were hidden mysteries yet to unravel.

Then the quasi-governess laughed suddenly—such a merry, infectious laugh that the tension of the situation was appreciably relaxed.

"Oh! It's too funny! And so entirely and truly my fault. The conductor told me on the train that I should get off at Woodside instead of Holtsville, as all the people here used that station. I found myself all alone there, and no one came to meet me. I waited hour after hour and I was so hungry and so hot that when I saw

your car coming down the road I took it for granted you had come for me." Oh, ye gods! "Saw my car," says she, and she had been sleeping as peacefully as any child. Verily, I have yet a lot to learn about women, in spite of my years. "So, I climbed in at once, thinking, of course, Mr. Harling had been unable to meet me himself and had sent his—" she checked herself in some slight confusion.

"Chauffeur," I suggested blandly. "—his—some friend of his, perhaps."

"And I, of course," I volunteered foolishly "thought you must be the—" Why, oh, why had I opened my mouth in my anxiety to justify myself?

"Governess, of course! It all fits together beautifully. And—and I had been told that the chauffeurs out here were so very independent and cheeky that one had to be firm with them at the very start, so as not to be imposed upon, and—and that's why I didn't ask. Then, when we met Mr. Harling, I was terrified, naturally, to find myself in the wrong car, and when you started off so suddenly, refusing to let me out, I nearly died of terror. I didn't know what might happen. How did Mr. Harling miss me?"

"He must have gone to Holtsville, I suppose," I answered. "We met him coming from that direction."

"Oh! And are you sure he isn't hurt? You would have stopped if you weren't?" she asked anxiously.

"He never got a scratch," I replied. "Went out clean and landed soft. I made sure before I cleared away again. I was afraid to stop any longer, in case he should climb in, too, and then, there'd have been the deuce and all of a fight, I guess, for I wouldn't have given you up, you know."

"Not even if he'd explained?"

"Not even then," I answered cheerfully. "I shouldn't have believed him. My mind had been so poisoned against him."

"How suspicious you are!" She looked at me disapprovingly. "I'm glad he didn't try, then. I wouldn't at all have fancied being mixed up in a fight on the public highway."

"Did he recognize you, do you think?" she asked, after a pause.

"Oh, yes. Besides, he knows my car."

"But he'll be awfully worried to think what has happened to me, and wondering where I've gone. He won't understand what it all meant. Can't you let him or Mrs. Harling know all about it, and tell them I'm all right?"

"The telephone's broken," Caroline put in, "so we can't get word to them that way. Come in and have something to eat first, and don't worry, and I'll arrange to send you over afterwards."

"But I mustn't wait, then! I must go to them right away!" Miss Clare exclaimed vehemently. "Thank you very much, but I can't possibly stay. Mrs. Harling will worry so. How can I get there?"

Seeing that she was occupying my car at that very instant, and that I was standing alongside, I could do naught else but place both car and owner at her disposal. Caroline urged us hospitably to wait and have a bite, and my weary flesh longed with a great longing for the comfort of meat and drink—much drink—but Miss Clare would not and could not tarry. She must relieve her friend's anxiety and remained firm in her refusal to waste one minute by accepting Caroline's repeated invitation. Ruefully and sulkily I got back into the car and started on our journey, after a shouted farewell to Caroline watching us from the steps. Between these two women I was having an arduous day and my spirit swelled with revolt. "A plague on both their houses!"

"Now, please don't go quite so fast this time," my companion remarked, as we turned into the road. "I'm awfully anxious to get to Mrs. Harling, but I don't want another experience like the one I've just had over your roads. Not in the same day, at least. Give me a chance to recover a little strength before you try it again."

As I had not the slightest intention at the time of giving her another run

in my car, fast or slow, her calm assumption of the probability rather annoyed me. Besides, I had not altogether forgiven her for the absurd situation she had forced upon me, whether her fault or otherwise, and I had been cheated of the revenge I had purposed to have upon her for her treatment of me at the station. A chauffeur, indeed! Furthermore, I had been compelled to do without my lunch as well.

"No, I won't repeat that performance today," I replied gloomily. "I'll wait until I find out how much this morning's run cost me."

"How do you mean?"

"Fines!" I said laconically. "They all know my car, and every village constable and pettifogging parish officer, clothed with a little brief authority, will put me down for the maximum penalty. I'll have to consult my bank-book before I plan another such dissipation."

"Oh, I see! What a gorgeous wind-fall it must be to the villagers along the way to be able to get all that money out of you and Mr. Harling. They'll wish for a new governess to come every day when they learn the particulars." She laughed merrily. The prospect of our impoverishment seemed to please her hugely.

"Well, Harling has a broken car to pay for as well," I remarked grimly. I got what little satisfaction I could from the thought that his plight was much worse than mine. Still, it wasn't at all nice of her to appear so amused about it. "It's been an expensive morning," I sighed.

"Ah, but so exciting, wasn't it?" she cried audaciously. "You don't regret it, surely! Do you know, I've never been run away with before. Never! Never!"

"Well, that's a wonder," I remarked. "I should think lots of men would want to."

Now that was a plainly idiotic thing to say. I don't know why I said it. I never intended to—it just slipped out some way. But the maiden was passing fair and her eyes were of a

most amazing sweetness and candor. Still, what an ass I was! Confound it, I never opened my mouth but I put my foot in it, and I am not what is known as a shy man, nor an over-young one, either. I was so annoyed over this that I would not speak to her for some time, and the silence grew irksome at length. She broke it suddenly, and it was evident how our thoughts had been traveling the same road.

"What time is it, please? I'm so hungry. Couldn't you hurry a little more? I don't believe I can last much longer."

Her voice drooped pathetically, but I hardened my heart.

"It's close on four o'clock now," I answered, "and we haven't far to go. I daren't go any faster. I must show these vigilant guardians of the law that I am thoroughly repentant, and they may cut down my fines when they understand the extenuating circumstances."

"There were no extenuating circumstances whatever," she rejoined, and again we relapsed into silence. I was obstinate enough not to alter our speed and maintained the same decorous rate of progress though my very soul ached for sustenance. I had a vague idea I was taming her spirit.

"I do wish you'd hurry," she said, at length, determined not to be rebuffed. "I'm—I'm starving!"

"I don't see how you can be so hungry," I remarked. "They say that sleep is quite as beneficial as food; that a nap of an hour or two is equivalent to a meal. Don't you find it so?"

"Sleep!" she cried amazedly. "Sleep! Why, no, I don't! I never sleep in the middle of the day, anyway."

"Oh!" I ejaculated.

"Is it a custom here to avoid eating? Do you think Mrs. Harling will offer me that instead of tea? What a horrible thought!"

She evidently missed my meaning, for she appeared no whit abashed.

"No! Oh, no! I don't think she'll do quite that," I replied assuringly, "but some people like it, though they

don't usually choose a station platform. That's an imported habit, and has not been thoroughly grafted on the inhabitants yet."

There I had her. I most certainly had her, at last, and I gratified my spirit at the sudden crimson flag waving in her cheeks. She was not to suppose I was the only one who had behaved unconventionally. I exulted basely in her confusion.

"But I never! You didn't!" she cried in distress. "You had only just arrived! How do you know?"

I explained the episode gravely.

"Oh!" she breathed. "Oh! Oh!" gamely struggling for composure and some adequate retort.

"Well, that was clever of you, wasn't it? It's hard to believe you could have been guilty of such an immense, monumental piece of stupidity directly afterwards as to take me for a governess."

"How about me as a chauffeur?" I queried sweetly, and conversation again languished. But I was conscious now of a gentler attitude of mind toward her. Presently, perhaps, I might forgive her.

We caught up to a cart traveling briskly along the road ahead of us, or rather to the cloud of dust which enveloped it and effectively shrouded its occupants from view. As we passed, a face peered down at me from a rift in the cloud, which I recognized as Harling's, and he proceeded at once to make fluent oration. In the midst thereof he fairly precipitated himself on top of me, and the next five minutes were given up to a vigorous, vociferous, deafening triangular chorus of explanations, recriminations, confessions and absolutions. He contributed:

"And, of course, I went to Holtsville to meet the train, and you weren't there, and I waited over an hour for the next one, thinking you might have missed the first. Then it occurred to me that you might have got off at Woodside, for some reason or other, so I set out for there, and met you, and, Jove!"—he went off into a fit of laughing. "Craddock's face as he saw me and

scooted off down the road! Lord! Lord!" and he almost rolled out of the car in his paroxysm of mirth.

"How's your car?" I queried. His enjoyment jarred me, as he seemed to have the joke all to himself. That sobered him.

"Busted, confound you!" he answered. "Not badly, though. Steering-gear broken, bonnet and one lamp smashed and a cylinder shifted a bit as far as I could make out. I had it towed to a blacksmith and got a man to drive me home."

"And you never tried to find out what had become of me?" broke in Miss Clare. "You took my abduction very coolly, I must say."

"Oh, what was the use of worrying?" he replied composedly. "I knew I couldn't ever catch up to you and hadn't any idea where you were heading for, and besides, although I didn't know what deep game old Craddock here was playing, I knew you couldn't come to any harm. Oh, it's lovely!" and again his unseemly, ribald laughter jarred the afternoon quiet. I only aroused him from his mirth as I swung the car up the road to his house and pulled up with a jerk before the door.

"I don't know how you two feel," he said, climbing out, "but I happen to be infernally hungry. You've both had lunch, I suppose, but I've not eaten since breakfast."

"Neither have we!" Miss Clare and I chorused simultaneously and dolefully.

"What—no lunch?"

"No lunch! No anything!" I answered somewhat crossly. "I'm starving—starving, Harling!"

"Serves you jolly well right for en-

gaging in such reprehensible practices as kidnapping maidens. I don't know about feeding you. Can he come in, Miss Clare?"

But Miss Clare had fled within the open doors and we could hear her voice mingled with Mrs. Harling's in an excited recital of the day's happenings. Harling looked at me.

"If Mrs. Harling gets at the bottom of the story, and I'm certain that is just what she is doing now, she will probably rend you limb from limb, but I'll see that you get something to eat anyway."

I paused doubtfully at the foot of the steps.

"Go in! Go in!" chaffed Harling. "and be offered up at the horns of the altar."

"Isn't Mr. Craddock coming in?" asked Miss Clare's voice from the cool dusk of the hall.

"He's trying to make up his mind," answered Harling. "He's afraid of Mrs. Harling."

"I'm not!" I objected stoutly.

"Then it's you, Miss Clare," laughed Harling, "and I don't wonder. He's behaved scandalously and is frightened to meet you on fair ground with friends to look after you. Say you are sorry, Craddock, and perhaps Miss Clare will be kind and forgive you. Abase yourself, and ask humbly for pardon!"

"I won't!" I said, looking up at the girl above me on the steps, "and I'm not a bit sorry. It's been the greatest day I've had for a long while, and I'm not sorry one bit—so there!"

And Miss Clare, gifted with rare understanding, smiled down at me approvingly.

"Neither am I!" said she.

Then we went in.



SOME men who think they have lost their hearts have lost nothing but their nerve.



UNEASY lies the head that wears a frown.

LOCKED HORNS

By Arthur Stringer

"Now they two were alone, yet could not
speak;
But heard the beating of each other's
hearts.
He knew himself a traitor but to stay,
Yet could not stir: she pale and yet more
pale
Grew till she could no more, but smiled
on him
Then when he saw that wished smile, he
came
Near to her and still near. . . ."

—PAOLO AND FRANCESCA.

THE two Indian axe-men went first, blazing a narrow trail as they went. Then came the guides, in a long line, with the dunnage and canoes on their shoulders. Next to them came Gabriel Matane, the forest-ranger, and next to him again Frisby, the deputy commissioner of crown lands. I brought up the rear, and at my side walked old Antoine, the guide.

The air was quite windless there in the heart of the woods, and it was unspeakably hot. The axe blows of the Indians far ahead echoed and reëchoed in strangely musical cadences through the leaf-filtered gloom. Yet in the world without we knew it was high noon.

The engulfing leafage, of a sudden, stunted down and came to a stop. Before us stood a sheer wall of rock, sixty feet in height. Along its base flashed and rippled a little stream, and between the stream and us a wild-plum thicket, in full bloom, filled the pale Canadian air with an almost oriental intoxication of perfume.

Matane, stalking about under the shadow of that grim wall for a place to pitch camp, stumbled and fell across a pair of moose horns. Once on his feet

again, he kicked the horns into the open. It was then that Antoine pointed out to me that it was not one pair, but two pair of great antlers, inextricably tangled and locked, that lay at our feet.

"They came over the cliff, together," he said, as he turned the horns over, slowly, wonderingly. Then he tried to shake them loose; but it was impossible. There were no other signs, no bones, just the twin pair of mysteriously locked horns remaining. A sense of tragedy long past and sublimated by time, such as may come to one in ruined cities and dead countries, crept over me. The isolation of the place, where, in all likelihood, the foot of man had never before pressed, together, perhaps, with the silence of the forest, and that unbetraying granite background against which our very whispers now echoed, made the impression of mystery a more tangible one.

"They met and fought, m'sieu'," said old Antoine, in his gentle French-Canadian *patois*, "it must have been many years ago. Neither won, m'sieu', as you see, for together they fell over the cliff, and this is all that is left. It was for love, of course, m'sieu'. That is the thing they all fight for, and fight the blindest!"

And in the murmurous and odorous shade of the far Northern wild-plum thicket old Antoine told me the story of Emmeline Belair and Phinee Lavoie, while the axe-men chopped wood for the campfire, and the locked horns and their locked history lay at our feet.

"That story, m'sieu', begins away back, I don't know how many years.

But this Emmeline Belair was the daughter of old Belair the lock-tender. And one day Phinee Lavoie was pushing his boat out through the sluice-gates, when he happened to look up. Emmeline was above, and she was looking down. She was a young girl, with red lips and very big eyes. He was a brave young *garçon*, with a red sash and brown hair. They turned toward each other, and their eyes met. And I think, m'sieu', when they met that way something locked together, fast, forever, just like these horns.

"But nothing happened then. Phinee rowed away in his boat. Emmeline went back to the lock. It was two years later, when old Belair was crushed by the sluice-gate, and had made a pilgrimage to Ste. Anne de Beaupré, that the good saint might effect a cure. There he fell down in a fit, at the very foot of the shrine, dead, and was buried on the hill, between the St. Lawrence and the Laurentians. Then Xiste Barbette, the notary public, took little Emmeline to his house and gave her a home. But he was a poor man, and he thought that maybe a fine girl like Emmeline would find a better home, before very long, or that maybe he could arrange for a marriage. But Emmeline had grown up like a wild thing, m'sieu', living alone, and never learning to work, like the other girls along the River. So old Barbette he waited to see what he could do about that Emmeline, and she waited and said nothing. Only she knew the kind little notary public would not be altogether sad when she had gone. For he had many to feed and very little money.

"Well, big Sebastien Sauriol—Black Sauriol, the men in the bush-gangs always called him—he heard about Emmeline having no home, and all day long when he was working with his gang at the head of the River, he kept thinking about her. He remembered her when she was a little girl, on the lock, looking down at him with her solemn eyes, as he poled his boom-logs through. Then all of a sudden he dropped his cant-hook, m'sieu', and he said out loud,

'By God, I'll marry that girl—and I'll marry her right away, too!' He was the boss of that Little Saint Justin lumber camp. So none of the boys said anything, when they heard that. They knew old Barbette could not keep Emmeline all the time. And they knew Black Sauriol had plenty of money and a good house at Saint Angele. He was a pretty old man, they think, to marry a young girl like that. And maybe, m'sieu', you would never call him the most handsome man in the province. But he was the boss. And when he hit the shanty table with his big fist and said he would send down for that girl right away the boys looked at one another, and said nothing. They just waited, m'sieu', for what would happen—and they all felt sorry for Emmeline.

"The second day after that Black Sauriol called young Phinee Lavoie over to where he was reading a letter. 'Phinee,' he said, 'you are the best boy in this camp! We have always been good friends, eh? You are not too old. You have a good face, and you are honest. I want you to help me out in this thing. Old Barbette has written back to me, and he says he has talked it over with Emmeline, and she says she will marry me, tomorrow, the next day, any time they like. I have worked on this bush-gang, Phinee, a good many years. And maybe that has made me seem hard. And maybe I look a little old,' he said to the boy. 'But I have lived an honest life, and I have saved my money; I can make a good home for that little girl. So I want you to go down to Barbette's, Phinee, and bring that little woman back with you. Take the best team in all the camp. When you get here I will have the curé from Saint Angele, and the cabin on the North Gap ready. And you explain everything the best you can, so it will not be too hard on the little woman!'

"Then Phinee he stepped back and said, 'Sebastien, I'd rather you got somebody else to do this for you!' And Black Sauriol he looked at Phinee and said, 'Boy, is this the way you are

going to act with the man who has been your friend, from the day you first came into his camp? I am the boss. Phinee, I say you must go!' And Phinee he looked at the fire for a long time, and then he said, 'All right, I'll go.' And Black Sauriol he said, 'Good,' and he looked at the fire, too, and sat there and thought and thought and thought.

"So Phinee fixed himself up, the way the French boys in the bush do, m'sieu', with red sash and toque and all his best clothes, as though he was getting ready for *veiller* himself. Then he took the team and the sleigh, and started out for Emmeline. First she asked him to wait just one day more, before he started back with her. Then she asked him to wait two, three, four days, until she got used to the thought of it all. Then she cried a little, and Phinee he did the best he could to make her feel better in her mind. Then, m'sieu', she would sit and look and look at him, and then she cried a little more. Then she went in, m'sieu', and said good-bye to her little white bed, and to the little white room, and came back to Phinee very pale, and said she was all ready.

"I think, m'sieu', that Phinee made that drive back to the camp longer than it might have been. For when he saw the shanty lights through the bush, and Emmeline started to tell him how good he had been with her, he turned away, quick, and told her not to touch him like that. 'This is the end,' he said, as he saw the curé at the shanty door. 'Yes, it's the end,' Emmeline she said, too. She leaned on his arm, as if she wanted to hold him back. Then they drove up to the shanty, and Phinee he opened the door, and Emmeline she took two, three, four steps inside. There was Sebastien, standing close by the fire, and all the boys standing and waiting round, and the curé from Saint Angele who had come to make the marriage. Phinee he pretended to be busy stamping the snow from his feet. All the boys they didn't know what to say or what to do. The curé he waited for Sebastien to speak

up. But Sebastien he stood there and waited, too.

"So Emmeline she stood there by the door, two, three, four minutes, and never said one word, while she looked from one man to the other, her face white, her eyes big, her hand up this way on her breast, so, m'sieu'. Then she turned and called out to Phinee, 'Where is he?' and her face was as white as the snow on her capote. Then the curé he said, as Sebastien had asked him, 'Can you not find your husband, my child, among all these men?' And she looked from one to the other, and shook her head and said nothing. And Black Sauriol, I think, he felt bad about that, and shut his teeth. Then Phinee saw that Emmeline was more and more frightened. So he took her by the hand and led her over to the fire where Sebastien was waiting so long for her. M'sieu', I never saw a woman look in a man's face like that before. It seemed as though she was looking into a river-fog where she could hear rapids, or into a grave. Then she fell back two or three steps and said, 'No, no, not him!' and staggered over to Phinee and hung on his arm, and said that she would be all right in just one little minute.

"Then she seemed to come awake, m'sieu', for when Phinee pulled her hands off him she turned round and crept over to where Sebastien was still waiting. She stood there and they say she whispered, 'What must I do, m'sieu'!' Sebastien, he saw her hands shake and he looked at her and said, 'Maybe you are afraid of me?' Then she said, very quiet, 'No, m'sieu'!' Then he said, 'I don't want to make you do this thing if you will be afraid of me all the time.' 'I have come, m'sieu', was all she said. Then he looked at her again. She was standing in the light from the fire. Her mouth was red, and her face was white, and her eyes were big. They glowed like lamps, m'sieu'. And while he studied her face he got white, and then he turned red. He shut his hands two or three times, so. 'The sooner the better,' was all he said, as he made the

sign for the curé. And most all that night young Phinee walked up and down outside in the snow, they say, while the boys had their dance in the cook-shanty, and the grand *fête* where Black Sauriol had given them twenty gallons of whisky, to make that the happiest wedding in the province.

"That is all there is to tell, m'sieu", until Black Sauriol was called down to the mills at Ottawa. But before he left he went to Phinee Lavoie. 'Phinee,' he said, 'you are the most honest man I know. I want you to help me out the second time!' And when he told Phinee to see that Emmeline was not lonely when he was away Phinee he said, 'Sebastien, I think I will go up with the river drivers this Spring.' Sebastien felt hurt when he heard that. 'Phinee,' he said, 'I thought you were the best friend I had!' 'That is just it!' Phinee answered. But Sebastien couldn't see what he meant. And Phinee stayed.

"That was early in the Spring. Emmeline she tried very hard to look happy in those days. And Phinee he tried very hard, I think, to do what was right. But you can see how it was, m'sieu"! It was no good. It all happened too late, for the trouble began that time she looked down from the sluice-gate, and he looked back at her again, a long time before Black Sauriol ever went away to the mills at Ottawa.

"And old Courteau, he told me what happened when Black Sauriol got home-sick and came back at the end of the second week. He found no one in the house. So he walked down the little path that led to the river. Then he saw Phinee and Emmeline there, listening to the singing of a little *oiseau* across the water. And something made Emmeline say, 'Phinee! Oh, Phinee!' like her heart would break, when she heard that little bird sing. It was getting dark. Then Phinee held out his arms for her, and the bird stopped singing across the River, and the night got dark. And still they never moved. They just sat there and said nothing. And Black Sauriol he understood. 'I got to kill that boy,' he said. And he

waited and waited, two; three months. 'I'll make him as ugly as I am, when my time comes!' was all he said.

"His time never came, m'sieu", until Phinee was at work in his gang on the skidway above the Devil's Décharge. Phinee was standing with his back to one of the loaded skids. He was listening to a little *oiseau* singing across the water. Black Sauriol watched him for a minute, from one end of the skid. Then he took his cant-hook and gave the lowest log a twist off the skid. That started them all. Two dozen, three dozen, four dozen of those big timbers went rolling down. And they took the boy with them, and under them, just like the rapids would take a birch-bark. And he was dead, m'sieu', a long time before they could get him out.

"When they told Emmeline about what had happened at the skid she begged to see the boy, and Sauriol said, 'Yes, let her see him!' But all the boys said no, it would not be right—he was crushed so badly, m'sieu'. But every day she looked at her husband with such big eyes and such a white face, and so many times when he came in he found her sitting alone, just thinking and thinking, m'sieu', that he lost his head. Then he caught her by the wrist and swung her round. 'You were in love with that young Phinee, by God!' he said to her. And she said nothing. She just looked at him with her white face. And he went out of the house, and shut his teeth and said, 'Sacredam, I will make that woman like me yet!'

"So before the bush-gang went to the head waters of the Titagami Black Sauriol he sent for old Dr. Bisnette, and explained to him that he wanted to know what made his young wife so thin and *triste*. And old Dr. Bisnette he talked with Emmeline. Then he talked with Black Sauriol, and told him that Emmeline's heart was not good. But Sebastien he watched her all the time, and put off using his bush-gang up the Titagami, month after month. And one day when he came home drunk and found Emmeline rocking her body from side to side, so, just

saying, 'Phinee! Phinee!' over and over again, he choked her with his big hands, and shook her like a dog would shake a rat, and threw her against the wall. She stayed in bed for two days. Then she got up to cook his breakfast, like she used to. When he saw her do that he tried to tell her that he was sorry for what happened. But she just looked at him with her white face and said nothing. Then he hit the table with his big fist and said, 'My God, woman, I will not have you look at me like I was a dog!' Then she said, 'Very well,' and she turned away to make his tea, while he watched her, all the time, with his teeth shut. And he saw her put something in his tea. Then he caught her by the shoulder and dragged her to the table, and smelt his tea, and cried out, '*Baptême*, you are trying to poison me, are you!' But she only laughed with a quiet little laugh and said he must be crazy.

"So she took up the spoon, m'sieu', and tasted that tea, just to show him that he was wrong. So he drank the tea, and looked at her all the time. And she looked at him all the time. Then, m'sieu', all of a sudden he jumped up from his chair, and staggered to the window and called for help. And when the neighbors ran in they found him on the floor. And when old Dr. Bisnette came and worked over him

and looked at that tea-cup, he shook his head, and told him the name of the poison, and asked where Emmeline was.

"And they all began to hunt for Emmeline. They found her on her bed, with Phinee Lavoie's red sash under her. And when they found her, m'sieu', she was dead. Then they looked at Black Sauriol and shook their heads. But old Dr. Bisnette he told them that when the woman took the little taste of that poison in the spoon it was neither too much nor too little. It was just the amount, m'sieu', to kill a person. But with Black Sauriol it had been different. 'I think that little woman wanted to kill you pretty bad, Sauriol,' the old doctor said, 'for she gave you enough to poison every man and woman in this village—and that was the lucky thing for you, I think!' And Black Sauriol, he looked out of the open window, past where we all stood and watched him, and he listened to a little *oiseau* singing, across the River. And he said, 'I don't call it lucky!' . . . And two years later, m'sieu', when he was killed in the log-jam above Doré Décharge, they brought him home and buried him next to Emmeline. But Phinee Lavoie he was buried away down the River where his old mother lived at Valiquette Mills!"



UNWELCOMED ELOQUENCE

By Mary Hinman Paine

MY dear, I beg you will not tax
Your chivalry to say kind things.
What words can solace when the note
Of eagerness no longer rings?

E'en though you've gained in eloquence
Until old accents sound uncouth—
My ears prefer the distant chime
That echoes from the distant truth.

THE SKELETON STALKS FORTH

By William Hamilton Osborne

THE torchlight procession came down the street. It wasn't a very big one. There were dozens just like it in Monroe that night.

Billy Olds, from the side window of his hall bedroom at Banigan's, watched it feverishly. It was making for him. He gulped hard.

"By George," he said to himself, "they've elected me! I've knocked out Schofield, after all."

As they approached the house he threw up the window and leaned out. The little band of men reached a point in the street opposite his window, and—passed on. Billy was just going to hail them—perhaps they didn't know exactly where he lived; when suddenly, he sank back, gasping, in his chair.

They were going to Schofield's! In his excitement he had overlooked the fact that Schofield lived a block further down the street. He saw it all. Schofield was elected, not he. He hesitated for a moment; then he seized his hat, dashed down the stairs and after the small crowd.

"Hey, boys!" he cried, with a hysterical whoop, "I'm in this, too. Don't forget."

And when they reached the home of Joseph Schofield Billy Olds was the first man to step out of the crowd and seize the hand of Schofield.

"What's the matter with *Scho-field*?" cried Billy Olds.

"*He's* all right!" promptly responded the procession.

"*Who's* all right?" demanded Billy Olds, with vigor.

"Joe Schofield!" yelled the crowd. "Thank you, gentlemen," said Joseph Schofield. He was the one

unconcerned man in the crowd. There was a reason for it. He had had assurances for weeks back that he couldn't be defeated. He invited all hands into his humble abode, and—"set 'em up."

To an onlooker the whole thing was insignificant. These two youngsters, Olds and Schofield, were tail-enders on the ticket. Nine-tenths of the people in Monroe didn't know Olds—or Schofield, either, for that matter. Voters, voting, didn't even read that far upon their ballots. For Schofield had not been elected Governor of the Commonwealth, nor Mayor of the city, nor even Alderman. He had merely been chosen as the ninth man upon the nine-man Board of Education in Monroe—an unsalaried office, one almost unsought.

But to the two men themselves the contest had been significant, for it was the very beginning of the political career of each. They were starting where the Mayor had started; where the Governor had started; where United States Senator Tremayne had started.

"And," said Joe Schofield to himself, "*I'm* the man who started right."

Billy Olds didn't say much. He went around next night to see Emily. When he had first met Emily he had acknowledged to himself that she was the kind of girl to tell things to. A man had to have somebody to tell things to.

"Well," he told Emily dejectedly, "I'm knocked out in the first round."

Emily smiled a bit sympathetically, a bit forlornly. "I know," she said, "Joe Schofield told me on his way to the bank this morning. It's too bad, Billy."

It worried her. But the thing that worried her more was the difference between the two men. Indelibly stamped upon Billy Olds, so it seemed to her, was the mark of ill-success. Where Billy Olds took one step Joe Schofield seemed to take two. And yet, somehow, Billy Olds had ever been the originator. Joe Schofield had gone into the County Bank because Billy had been there. But he had forged ahead of Billy—just enough ahead to mark the difference. Joe had known *her*, Emily, because Billy had introduced him. And now Joe Schofield had gone into politics, apparently, because Billy Olds had gone. And, as usual, Joe had come in a nose ahead. To Emily the two seemed to be on either side of the fine line that divides success from failure. She was sorry, because she liked Billy Olds. But—she admired success, also. She sighed.

"I suppose Joe won out," she said to Billy, "because he spent so much money."

Joe shook his head. "I didn't have much to spend. Besides, Emily girl, how could I? I'm saving up, you know . . . How much did Schofield spend? Did you hear?"

"He told me this morning," returned the girl, "that it cost him a thousand dollars."

"*What!*" gasped Billy Olds.

She nodded and went on. "He said it was worth it, because now that he'd started right he'd keep right on." She sniggered soberly. "He said that he would be Governor some day. Joe boasts so much."

"Maybe he will," returned Billy, "but—a thousand dollars. Why, the office isn't worth it. There's no salary. And, besides . . . Joe Schofield hasn't got a thousand dollars."

"He borrowed it, perhaps," the girl suggested. And there again she was impelled to admiration of a man like Schofield who dared to take a risk. Billy Olds was safe, steady, true; but to her mind it was, nowadays at least, the skilful taking of chances that spelled success.

"A thousand dollars!" repeated Billy Olds.

He was not the only man who kept repeating that. Joe Schofield repeated it to himself night and day, day and night. He had won out. But at what cost?

He knew. He had made his calculations; he had figured it all out.

He *had* spent a thousand dollars. And the thousand dollars didn't belong to him—had not been loaned to him. He had taken it out of the coffers of the bank. He was a forger and a thief.

The means had justified the end. For Joseph Schofield had known, suddenly, that he was a politician to the manner born. Politics was to him breath to his nostrils, life-blood in his veins. He was born to be a leader; he would be one. *He* knew. . . .

A week after the election the cashier hustled out into the tellers' cages.

"Say, boys," he said, "let's get a move on this week. The bank examiners are coming down on Monday. We want to get everything cleaned up, right up to the minute. Don't forget."

The bank examiners! Schofield started for an instant. Monday—they would be there Monday. He must keep that in his mind.

At four o'clock that afternoon Joseph Schofield, newly elected school commissioner, strode into the office of the clerk of the Board of Education.

"Tommy," he said to the clerk, "who is the city buying books of now?"

The clerk grinned. The text-book trade of the city of Monroe was a big contract worth having. The clerk passed over a cigar.

"I'll tell you, Joe," he said, "four years ago the Universal Book Concern of Manhattan Borough stuck its head into our town and bought up the machine. For two years we had to buy their books. For the last two years the books have been something like—for we turned down the Universal. Perkins-Stape are selling us. We've got an honest board, Joe, just by the turn of a hair."

"How was the vote last year?" asked Schofield.

"Five for Perkins-Stape books," replied the clerk, "and four for the Universal Book Concern."

Schofield whistled. "Close, Tommy, pretty close," he said.

"The man that's gone out is a Perkins-Stape member," proceeded the clerk; "that's why I'm glad you're in. You're a good man, and we want to keep up the good work. It'll still be five to four."

Schofield tapped the clerk on the shoulder. "Tommy," he said glibly, "I'm a public-school man; I was educated in the public schools, and I want to see the schools get the best books that can be bought for the least money. I don't know whose books are the best."

"You won't make any mistake when you take a look at 'em," laughed the clerk.

"But, by George," concluded Schofield, "you can place your bottom dollar, Tommy, that when I vote for books I'll vote *right*."

The clerk's hand shot out. He sobered. "Put it there, Joe," he exclaimed. "I'm mighty glad we've got as square a man as *you*."

Joe Schofield left the City Hall, and caught the P. Q. & R. train for New York.

"Blamed idiots," he told himself genially; "what do they think I'm in this for—my health? . . . One thousand dollars. One thousand dollars. . . . One thou . . ." He kept repeating this to himself as he went along.

Within an hour he was at the offices of the Universal Book Concern. He handed in his card, with his official title scribbled upon it. It was a talisman—an open sesame. He was ushered through a maze of rooms, into the holy of holies. The man who sat at the desk in the holy of holies looked Joe Schofield over with inward satisfaction.

"A born politician," he told himself.

In five minutes the man at the desk knew—though nothing so direct had been intimated, even—that Schofield held the controlling vote on the book question in the lively educational city of Monroe. He knew, intuitively,

why it was that Schofield was sitting there. He smiled; he would take a risk. This Schofield was the right kind.

"Mr. Schofield," he said, "let's talk business. What do *you* want, anyhow?"

Joe Schofield leaned back in his chair and puffed on his cigar. He was no fool; and he knew safety when he saw it; the man at the desk was *safe*.

"I want one thousand dollars," answered Joseph Schofield, school commissioner of the city of Monroe.

He got it. Having it, he tried to get it back into the bank—tried to, because it is as hard to pay back stolen money to a bank as it is to take it out. This was a thing he had not reckoned on. When he had taken it, and had forged the lumber merchant's signature to the notes, he had assured himself that his destiny would place within his hands, at the proper time, the wherewithal to make good. . . . But this other thing paralyzed him. A bank is essentially a place of records—and the record would show the payment back. The theft might, for a time, remain undetected; but the restitution would lead to instant discovery. And the bank examiners were coming Monday.

At 9.30 Monday morning he stepped into the office of the president of the bank. At 9.45 his confession was complete. When he began his confession he laid the thousand dollars down upon the desk. He said nothing as to its source. There it was, the damage had been repaired. For the rest he threw himself upon the mercy of the president. And Schofield *knew*—he knew the outcome just as well as he knew the president; it was because of his knowledge of the president that he was doing the thing in the way he did. And his courage returned when he saw tears standing in the old man's eyes.

"I'm sorry, my boy . . ." the good old man began.

"Of course we cannot keep you here. Mr. Schofield," he said at the termination of his lecture, "but there will be no . . . no prosecution. And—and I . . . you are repentant. I believe. And this shall be our

secret, yours and mine. I—I'm sorry . . . so . . ."

He stopped. "Dear me," he said energetically, "we must be *just* first. I—I had forgotten. There's a third party to this. It's Martindale. We—we must get him here. We . . ."

Schofield nodded, but shivered as he did so. His real iniquity had been against Martindale, the lumber dealer of Monroe. It was Martindale's signature that Schofield had forged—the counterfeit notes were replicas of Martindale's long-time obligations.

Martindale came. He was furious—at first. But the president pleaded Schofield's cause so well that Martindale relented. And Schofield was terrifically urgent.

"Mr. Martindale," he pleaded, as only Joe Schofield knew how to plead, "it isn't for myself alone. I'm started into politics here in Monroe to make a clean fight. And I don't want a blot on my escutcheon. I'm a forger and a thief, but I don't want the brand burned in."

Martindale nodded. "You sit down there and write it out—that you're a forger and a thief," he said, "and I'll let you off. Make it as short as you want—but sign it. And let Mr. Keazy witness it. Now then, give it to me—and the notes. Oh, Lord, yes, let me have the notes. . . . Now then, young man," he said sternly, "you keep straight and I'll be as silent as the grave. But, mark you, if you're ever crooked again, the Lord have mercy on your soul, for I shall not. Good day."

Schofield drew a long breath. He was free.

A month later there was another storm—this time in the Board of Education.

"I don't care," Schofield yelled angrily into the faces of his confrères, "I vote according to my convictions. I know a good book when I see it, just as well as you do. I don't care whose books they are. I look at the book first and the name afterward. I'm here to vote as I think. And I've

thought, and you've got my vote. And if you don't like it . . ."

And from thenceforth the Universal Book Concern supplied the textbooks for the schools. The leaders of the machine in Monroe read about it in the papers and looked one another in the eye.

"He's all right," they said.

But long before the Board had passed its resolution anent books Joe Schofield had passed a resolution in his inner consciousness—a resolution born of bitter experience.

"Whatever you do, Joe Schofield," he admonished his soul, "whatever you do, keep your *record* clean." It was his guiding star. From that time on Schofield, in his political career, did many things. But the things that went upon the record were above reproach. The other things—well, Joe Schofield was a thoroughgoing politician, after all. *He* knew.

Emily married Billy Olds. She did it because she loved him. She did not altogether admire him, however. Billy seemed, somehow, too honest, too careful, too slow-going. He wasn't practical. From the first he had been a fanatic. He had started—or tried to start—into politics, with one central idea before him—honest government. As a principle it was good—Emily admitted it; everybody admitted it. But Joe Schofield was practical, and his record was good.

Emily shared the opinion of the other people of Monroe, and Monroe believed Joe Schofield to be honest. The machine back of Joe Schofield was rotten, but Joe was all right, so the people told themselves—that is, all the people save Martindale. Martindale was watching. "I don't like the looks of that Schofield fellow," he would tell himself, "and if I ever catch him . . ."

But Martindale was one of the three men who knew Schofield's secret. The rest of the town didn't know.

Emily and Billy Olds of the bank didn't know. And Billy, who had originally been hoisted into the place left vacant by Joe Schofield, was still

plodding away, still figuring out the question of honest government, government of the people, by the people, for the people.

"We've got to get *back* to that, Emily," he told his wife. Poor man—fanatic, weakling that he was. Emily loved him more and more. She felt sorry for him more and more. He was Alderman now—but he was only one pitted against all the common council; he ran against the field. He would come home from the wrangles in the City Hall, tired out, but with a flush of hope upon his face.

"I can see it coming, Emily," he would tell her. "I'm going to beat them out."

"But . . . when?" Emily would sigh. For Joe Schofield was climbing the ladder of political success two rounds at a time. At last he became candidate for Mayor. He was more than candidate in the event. He was elected by the machine.

Then Monroe began to wake up. Schofield was ambitious for his town. He wanted her well dressed. He wanted new parks, new municipal buildings, new county buildings. The ring sat up and sniffed. *Contracts—u-m-m-m—building contracts*. It was good.

In the two years that he was Mayor Schofield got the thing well under way. It was a popular move. The laborers liked it, for it made more work; the contractors liked it, for it meant good livings; the patriots liked it, for they could distribute souvenir postals; and the machine . . . *well!* It did Schofield much good. And the machine, grateful as it was, pushed him along for Governor.

When he was first talked about for Governor Schofield sat down and reasoned with himself. There were things he wanted to be sure about. He went straight to Martindale, of the Martindale Construction Company.

"I can still rely upon your silence about that fiasco of seven years ago?" he asked. "This means business. I'm going in, this time, upon my record."

Martindale nodded. "My word stands," he answered. "Your *record* has been clean. I don't know anything against you. If I did it would be different. Keep straight and go ahead."

"He *won't* know anything against me, either," winked Schofield to himself. He girded his loins.

But there were other things happening. The county convention of Billy Olds's organization was held late in July. It was the same humdrum affair, choosing men to be knocked down by the ring in November. At least, so it seemed to the convention. . . . But by ten o'clock it had changed its mind. For upon the platform there strode up and down a man who suddenly had become a living principle—a man with hand in air, voice tremulous with power; an apostle sent to his people. It was Billy Olds. His time had come. "Good government"—that was his slogan.

Emily sat up until two o'clock that night. It worried her. Billy never had been late. At half-past two she saw him, in the midst of a crowd of struggling men, borne home upon their shoulders.

"We—we're going to *fight* the machine *this time!*" he gasped when they were left alone. "And Emily—oh, Emily, the State convention next week is going to put me through—for Governor!"

For Governor! The words burned themselves into Emily's brain. It seemed impossible. *Her* husband! Why, he wasn't a politician; he was honest, yes—but what of that?

"Of course," Billy told her next morning, "I won't be elected. I can't expect that."

She wilted. It was always this way. What was the use of running if election was impossible? After all, Billy was the same old Billy.

Schofield laughed when he read the reports of the Olds speech. But Senator Mulholland, of the machine, did not laugh. He called Schofield over to his house.

"We've got to counteract this, Joe."

he said. "The New York magazines have been cutting in like thunder. Public opinion, you know. . . ."

Schofield grew grave. Then he slapped his thigh. "If it's as bad as that," he laughed, "why, thunder, I'll get busy. *I'm a man with a clean record, senator. I'll run on an independent platform, against my own machine.*"

"The very thing," returned the senator. In an hour the independent declaration of Joseph Schofield, and the planks of his platform, were in the newspapers. "Good government"—that was *his* slogan.

Emily read about it and her heart sank. Schofield was smart. And his planks and principles—why, Billy's principles were rotten compared with those of Schofield.

But there was another thing the senator and Joe Schofield had to discuss that day—the building contracts. The senator smiled.

"The Monroe Construction Company, of course," he said.

"Of course," returned Joseph Schofield, champion of good government. "That's more important than the governorship."

Well, Billy Olds's convention nominated him. And Joe Schofield's convention nominated *him*—convening itself, however, a little later than that of Olds, in order to improve still more upon the platform. And the State knew, as by a trumpet blast, that Joe Schofield had at last become the champion of the people.

"I refer you," Joe Schofield said to them, "to my record. It's a clean one."

Billy Olds shivered. Already was he beaten on his own ground.

Now Martindale, of the Martindale Construction Company, was not a politician. But he was a very astute business man. He knew a trick or two himself. And he had his eye upon the city contracts—the new public building. The Martindale Construction Company was the largest building concern in Monroe; and Martindale made up his mind to hand in the very lowest

bid. He was bound to get those contracts. He did what he, as a private business citizen, felt himself justified in doing—he placed a spy in the works of every other construction company in Monroe. It was a thing he would not have tolerated for an instant in a public department, but he knew well that all the other people had a spy in *his* employ, so the various wrongs seemed to make a right. He hesitated a long while before putting a man in touch with the Monroe Construction Company, a weak, spindling corporation with an inefficient yard, but he did it, nevertheless. This spy reported regularly and reported progress. . . . And Martindale slowly opened wide his eyes.

In October the bids were opened. Martindale was the lowest and the best bidder. The spindling Monroe Construction Company was one of the highest and the poorest. And the contracts meant—hundreds of thousands of dollars. The common council never turned a hair. It awarded the contracts right and left to the Monroe Construction Company. It had the right to do so, if it chose.

Martindale was wroth. "*This is honest government,*" he told himself. But he kept his own counsel.

"Jehoshaphat," he whispered later to himself, when the reports of his spy were all in. "Joseph Schofield, your record may be clean, but, by George, if all the things *behind* the record are like *this* . . ." He snorted.

"We *need* good government," he assured himself. That is just what Billy Olds kept assuring his people when he opened his campaign in the old skating-rink that Fall. Billy had been learning many things these years, and it was his intention to stump the State and let the people know the facts. He told well what he had to tell.

But Joseph Schofield had more than knowledge. He caught the sympathy of the crowd because he was doing a difficult thing—a heroic one—flying in the face of his own leaders.

"This is *not* a fight between myself and William Olds," he thundered,

"it's a fight between me and my machine—a fight to the death. If I go down I go down forever. It is for you to say whether I shall live. And if I succeed, my friends, it shall be upon my record. As I stand before you tonight, men of my kind, my record is a clean one. I have yet to do an unclean thing. Never yet have I wronged another man."

A voice in the crowd: "Never?"

"*Never!*" answered the imperturbable Joseph.

There was a pause. A man, solid, prosperous, but rough-hewn, worked his way up toward the platform. He was the owner of the voice. He was Martindale—warm and perspiring and indignant. Behind him was the memory of the recent award of the Monroe contracts, and their secret history; things he *knew*, but could not prove. But in his hand he held something susceptible of proof.

"Joseph Schofield," he snarled, "you're a liar. Your record is not clean. You've fooled this crowd tonight. You're a liar. And—you're something more. *You're a forger and a thief.*"

He had said it. And he saw that the reporters of the opposition press had taken it down word for word. It mattered not to Martindale that the crowd called him drunk, and hustled him this way and that and finally out of the hall. The reporters knew he was Martindale. They followed him out—followed him to the house of the aged president of the bank.

"You've got to tell these chaps the truth," Martindale said to the president. The president couldn't deny it. It would have been impossible to deny, anyway—and very bad business. For Martindale was the bank's heaviest customer, almost.

And in his hand Martindale held the goods—goods that next day appeared facsimile in the opposition papers of the State.

Schofield had made one mistake the night before. In the excitement of the moment in the hall he had denied the story. In the shame of the exposure

in the papers he denied it emphatically again.

If he had only admitted it! But—it was too late. The crowd was like Martindale. It could forgive, perhaps, a peccadillo of seven years before—but to deny its truth was to recommit the crime.

In his anger Schofield rushed in to Martindale's. "You—you broke your word," he stammered.

Martindale laughed in his face. "Schofield," he retorted, "what about you and the senator and the common council and—the Monroe Construction Company, eh? Tell me about that."

Schofield shut up and went back. That was, as he had said, much more important than the governorship.

"I'll break up those contracts, see if I don't," Martindale yelled after him.

He was as good as his word—he did. And when the time came he got his fair share of municipal construction.

Well, at the last the people came to understand. It was not the exposure of an old sin that defeated Schofield; that only was the occasion. It earned for Billy Olds a hearing—*now*. He knew he would get it some day. But now the people opened wide their eyes and ears. And Billy Olds, a man of single purpose, of wide experience, of terrific industry and persistence, step by step was molding public opinion.

"Don't you see," he told his people, "that we've got to get back to freedom; back to government of the people, by the people, for the people?"

Emily smiled through her tears when, on election evening, he announced his victory to her.

"Billy, Billy," she cried, "how did you ever do it?"

Billy shook his head. "It came sooner than I expected," he answered, "but it was bound to come—at last."

"I'm glad, dear," she said to him, "that at last you've had success."

He smiled wearily. "I'm glad," he answered, "that we're to have good government at last."

Billy Olds was a principle instead of a pickpocket. He was not a politician. He was a—Man.

LA JOLIE FEMME

Par Pierre Veber

JUSTE au moment où notre train va partir, une jolie femme monte dans le wagon. Elle ne se presse pas; le valet de chambre, sur le quai, lui tend ses bagages; elle les installe, un à un, dans le filet, au-dessus de nos têtes, et nous pensons tous à Damoclès. C'est d'abord un petit sac carré, puis un nécessaire, puis un autre nécessaire oblong, et encore un nécessaire, un autre sac dans sa housse, et un autre nécessaire.

Sur le quai, le chef de gare guette la fin de ce va-et-vient, et pour gagner du temps, il applique déjà son sifflet contre le cul-de-poule de ses lèvres. La jolie femme dit à son valet de chambre:

— Monsieur va manquer le train, comme d'habitude!... Vous ne l'apercevez pas?

— Non, madame, répond sans tristesse le valet coiffé d'un panama trop large.

Les lèvres du chef de gare se décident à pondre un sifflement; le laquais tend à sa maîtresse un dernier nécessaire et des journaux illustrés.

— Vous préviendrez Monsieur, di-telle.

Puis elle s'assied, tandis que des deux côtés du wagon le paysage recule.

Je la regarde. C'est vraiment une très jolie femme: elle est grande, bien faite; sa taille mince tiendrait entre deux pouces et deux index; sa poitrine généreuse tiendrait entre deux bras; elle porte un costume tailleur qui vient d'une bonne maison. C'est un costume de gros drap fantaisie à reflets verdâtres. Dieu que c'est jolie, une femme bien habillée!... La jolie femme est coiffée d'un grand chapeau de paille blanche, avec une vaste voilette marron foncé; cette exquise créature est blonde —

peut-être d'un blond naturel — ses cheveux ne sont point ondulés; ils n'ont pas ce pli cassé, vulgaire, que donne le fer; ils sont "ondés" plutôt. Je continue mon inventaire: les yeux de la personne, très clairs, sont d'un bleu pensif; les sourcils très longs et très minces; le nez, un tout petit peu fort, est rond; les lèvres, charnues, sont assez régulières; l'expression du visage est charmante; j'aime le velouté rare de cette peau; j'ai soif de cette pêche. Ah! comme j'aimerais cette femme, si elle le voulait! Sans doute, la place est prise.

Quand je suis en chemin de fer, je ne puis regarder une femme sans imaginer qu'elle va comprendre ma belle âme avant cinq minutes; je lui accorde un délai d'un quart d'heure; je dois avouer qu'elle n'en profite jamais.

La jolie femme n'en profita pas non plus. Au lieu de me regarder, elle contempla le couloir du wagon, et, derrière les portières, la fuite éperdue des annonces monumentales qui ornent les murs et les champs. Elle ruminait probablement ce qu'elle dirait le soir à ce mari qui avait manqué le train: "Je suis restée toute seule, dans un wagon plein d'hommes! De quoi avais-je l'air? J'ai dû me débrouiller toute seule; et il y avait un monsieur très malhonnête qui me dévisageait tout le temps! Tu vois à quoi tu m'exposes!" Et ce serait moi, le monsieur malhonnête. Les autres voyageurs, plus polis et plus âgés, ayant repris la lecture des journaux quotidiens, je prolongeai jusqu'à vingt minutes le délai que j'accorde aux personnes dont la fréquentation me plairait.

Au bout de vingt minutes, la jolie femme ne s'était pas décidée à m'aimer. Elle ne se doutait pas du roman passionné que j'avais construit; elle n'était point pressée de connaître les phrases ingénieuses, les aperçus brillants, les plaisanteries fines que je prépare toujours afin de les employer dans un premier entretien, et qui ne servent jamais, parce que la conversation s'égare tout de suite.

Non; elle avait pris de futiles magazines, des journaux illustrés; elle les feuilletait, en lisait un peu, regardait une image, sautait à la fin, reprenait au commencement, bref, "chipotait" sa lecture.

Elle se leva, afin d'ôter sa jaquette; et, un instant, les voyageurs admirèrent des hanches fort belles; ils en furent émus, car ils eurent du mal à se courber de nouveau sur leurs quotidiens. La voyageuse se rassit et reprit sa lecture.

Le découragement me saisit. Je renonçai à toutes les aventures que j'avais espérées; un dernier regard à cette femme qui ne sait pas ce qu'elle perd, et j'empoigne mon roman de voyage, ce roman que je devrai avoir lu quand le train arrivera en gare de Trouville. C'est le roman à la mode, celui dont on m'a dit: "Lisez donc ça, ce n'est pas mal du tout, c'est d'un jeune homme!" Et, déjà, je suis mal disposé; encore un nouveau dans le métier de lettres? Ne sommes-nous pas assez de punaises dans cet antique bois de lit?... Et si ce nouveau a du talent!...

Dès les premières lignes, je suis rassuré, le roman ressemble aux autres romans. J'en ferais autant, donc ce n'est pas dangereux. Aussitôt, je prends plaisir à ce que je lis; j'abats mes cinquante pages à l'heure, et la fatigue seule me force à lever la tête.

D'abord, je vérifie le paysage. Lorsque je regarde à la portière, j'espère toujours que le paysage a changé pendant que je lisais: c'est en vain. Il y a sans cesse le même édreton de luzerne, le petit bois au creux, et la colline au fond. De temps en temps, une petite usine ou un village. C'est ainsi depuis Saint-Denis, la nature ne se modifie que sur les lignes d'intérêt local.

Soudain, je me rappelle qu'il y a une jolie femme dans le wagon! Qu'est-elle devenue, depuis une heure? Elle est toujours là, mais... oui... il me semble que *ce n'est pas la même!*

Sans doute, l'autre avait cette robe de gros drap à reflets de bronze; l'autre avait ce vaste chapeau à grande voilette marron foncé; l'autre avait cette blouse blanche, cette chaîne d'or et cette ceinture de cuir. Mais, à coup sûr, elle était plus jolie!

Il s'est fait, depuis le départ, un changement très appréciable dans la gracieuse personne. Au premier coup d'œil, elle m'avait paru plus élégante, plus svelte; je lui avais donné vingt-deux ans au juger; elle en a certainement plus: vingt-six ans, trente peut-être. Ses cheveux, j'en suis sûr à présent, ne sont pas d'un blond naturel; ils sont moins touffus que je ne pensais. Les yeux ont peu d'expression, en somme; habitués à ne transmettre que des idées assez banales, ils sont de ce bleu de porcelaine que l'on ne saurait apprécier. Le nez dépare cette figure, tout de même agréable. Toutefois, je jurerais que le vent de la course a terni le duvet de ma pêche: la peau n'a plus cet exquis velouté; la taille semble s'appesantir. Je n'avais pas remarqué: le corset, qui s'accuse maintenant sous la blouse, est très haut; il se pourrait que la charmante voyageuse n'eût pas une poitrine à défier celle d'Hélène qui fournit le moule d'une coupe impeccable.

Du buste, je redescends; je n'avais pas observé que cette dame eût les jambes aussi longues; la distance du genou aux hanches est exagérée. Les pieds ne sont pas d'une finesse rare: ils s'allongent dans les chaussures jaunes. Et les mains?... Voyons les mains, puisque cette dame s'est dégantée. Les mains sont osseuses, quelque peu noueuses, et les doigts sont plats. Vraiment, cette personne n'est pas vilaine; mais il n'y a pas de quoi s'emballer; elle a cessé de lire, elle ne prend aucun plaisir à ses pensées; elle regarde le paysage. Tout de même, si elle détournait les yeux sur moi, si elle me laissait entendre qu'un peu de causerie

la distrairait, je quitterais ma place pour me rapprocher de la sienne... Non?... Elle ne veut pas?... Tant pis!

Auprès de moi, les voyageurs se sont laissés aller au sommeil. Je suis tout seul avec cette dame indifférente. Je retourne à mon livre. J'en étais resté à la page 51... Je lis, je lis avec rage, en sautant les descriptions.

Je suis à la page 122; rien n'a pu me distraire. On s'est arrêté deux fois, je crois. Je n'ai pas bougé, j'ai abattu ma tâche, page après page. Ce livre commence à m'ennuyer; le procédé de l'auteur m'étant devenu familier, je prévois les développements, et, d'avance, je finis les phrases. J'irai jusqu'au bout, quitte à passer la moitié de ce qui me reste à lire, car je suis le dernier lecteur consciencieux. Auparavant, je m'accorde une récréation: je me permets de regarder la jolie femme. Je retiens un cri d'horreur! C'est *ça* qu'elle est devenue!... bercée par le roulis du wagon, par le bruit des roues, elle s'est endormie, elle s'est endormie sur la hanche gauche, parce que son corset ne lui permet pas d'autres positions. Mais les traits, qu'elle ne surveille plus, se sont aussitôt tirés; le nez a encore grossi; les lèvres fermées se sont abaissées et ternies dans une moue désagréable: les joues se creusent, une ride apparaît sur le front. Les jolies femmes ne devraient jamais dormir en chemin de fer: le sommeil les vieillit. "L'expression" qu'elles ont composée avec tant de soin, et retenue avec tant de travail, et qui doit vous indiquer le caractère qu'elles voudraient avoir, cette expression menteuse s'est effacée; elles trahissent alors leur âme véritable; la bouche en indique la vulgarité et la méchanceté; le nez accuse les appétits grossiers, la ride du front proclame l'entêtement et la rancune. Une mèche de cheveux s'est détachée de la chevelure et pend sur l'oreille; ce sont des cheveux usés par les décolorants. La peau est devenue brillante, car la vaseline a eu raison de la poudre de riz; les narines sont grasses, la peau est rugueuse. Où est le velouté? Les sourcils s'effacent, et

cette jeune femme qui dort ressemble sûrement à madame sa vieille mère, que je ne connais point et qui doit être à cette heure la caricature de sa fille. La fatigue accuse les défauts que j'avais supposés; la poitrine s'incurve, les hanches s'étalent; le faux col déboutonné montre un cou maigrelet.

Le désordre de la toilette n'est pas fait pour corriger cette fâcheuse impression: le trop grand chapeau s'écrase contre la paroi du wagon, s'incline sur l'oreille; la blouse est noire de cendres; de grands faux plis rompent l'harmonie des lignes de la jupe; celle-ci, un peu remontée, découvre une cheville maigre. Et je constate ce désastre avec une douleur infinie. C'était bien la peine d'avoir rêvé des heures folles en compagnie de cette personne! A supposer qu'elle eût consenti à m'aimer, un jour serait venu où j'aurais constaté ces tares, cette déchéance qu'une maîtresse ne saurait cacher longtemps à son amant. Je l'avais échappé belle!...

Et, délivré d'un regret, je reprends à la page 123. Je ne tiens plus à regarder la voyageuse. Elle me supplierait d'être à elle, que je lui répondrais par le plus impoli des respects. Je suis heureux, allégé, je lis deux fois plus vite.

Nous approchons de Trouville; la dame s'éveille en sursaut; elle prend le plus petit de ses sacs, celui qui est en peau de crocodile; elle en tire un petit miroir rond, et aussitôt tout change: le chapeau se redresse; l'expression revient sur les lèvres; le buste se raidit; la dame prend une houpette qu'elle se promène sur la figure, à l'instar des chats qui se frottent le museau par les temps d'orage. Elle secoue la cendre, remet dans l'ordre la mèche égarée, reboutonne le col, efface les faux plis de la robe. A vue d'œil, elle se transforme; elle a reconquis le velouté; elle a éteint le vernis de son nez, qui diminuait aussitôt; elle a retracé l'arc des sourcils, rendu le rouge brillant aux lèvres.

Elle ferme son petit sac, remet sa jaquette, et, quand nous entrons en gare de Trouville, elle est presque aussi jolie qu'au départ.

Mais je ne l'aime plus!...

THE FIRST READER AND THE FOURTH ALARM

By Robert Rudd Whiting

HE was first reader on *Jones's Magazine*. His duties consisted in reading manuscript from 9 A.M. until 5 P.M., with an hour out for luncheon, but he had a bad habit of reporting at the office just in time to take the hour out for luncheon. The "boss" spoke to him about it. He admitted that he overslept a good deal.

"You see, I keep house in a two-room flat and have no one to waken me," he explained. "I'll have to buy an alarm-clock."

For the next few days he did better, but at the end of the week his hour of arrival began to draw close to the luncheon hour again. Again the "boss" spoke to him.

"Yes, sir. I'm very sorry," he apologized. "I bought an alarm-clock and for a while it did splendidly. But I'm getting so used to it now that when I hear it in my sleep I only dream that it wakes me up, and unfortunately the dream never comes true. I'll get another alarm-clock, sir, and set 'em fifteen minutes apart."

The "boss" was patient, and told him to go ahead.

Next morning he actually arrived before the offices were opened, and for a few days he was promptness personified. Then his punctuality began to run down, and before the end of the second week he was as slow as ever.

Again the "boss" spoke to him, this time with less patience. The first reader was very repentant.

"Just one more chance," he pleaded. "I'll buy another alarm-clock—one of those two-dollar, extra-long-ring kind—and if all three of 'em don't

wake me—but they will, sir. I *know* they will."

"Very well," consented the "boss" rather reluctantly. Was he showing lack of firmness? he asked himself. "But remember, young man, this is your last chance. I've warned you twice. Three times and out—that's the rule, you know."

For ten days the third alarm-clock worked wonders. The space on the time card opposite the first reader's name showed a perfect score. The "boss" was glad of it. He liked the first reader. In the three months that he had been there he had unearthed two new writers from the daily slough of manuscripts, and every once in a while he bobbed up with a really original idea for the publicity department. Still, every office has its rules, and discipline must be maintained.

On the eleventh morning after the purchase of the third alarm-clock the fluffy girl behind the "cage" at the gate glanced at her time card. Then she glanced at the clock. Three minutes after ten. The fluffy girl sighed. Everybody liked the first reader.

"Jimmy," she called to the boy, "tell Mr. Jones that he isn't here yet." "Geel!" commented Jimmy.

In a few moments the "boss" strode down the hall, waving a freshly addressed envelope to dry the ink.

"Have Mr. Murphy make up his pay envelope," he told the fluffy girl gruffly, "and when he comes in give him this with it," handing her the letter.

It was nearly noon when at last the first reader reached the offices. He looked tired, and the fluffy girl noticed that his hand trembled when she gave

him the envelopes. He stuffed his pay into his pocket and tore open the letter. The fluffy girl anxiously watched his face while he was reading. Then, with a deferential smile, he said, "I'm going to lunch now. If anyone calls for me"—nobody ever did—"would you mind telling them that I sha'n't be back this afternoon?"

Early next morning a district messenger boy called at *Jones's Magazine* with a long, fat envelope for the "boss." He said there would be an answer. The "boss," recognizing the handwriting, had his doubts. This is what he read:

MY DEAR MR. JONES:

Do not for a moment think that I question the justice of my dismissal. I merely write this explanation of my tardiness this morning that you may understand that my offense was in no way due to any lack of appreciation on my part of the kindness and consideration that you have always shown me. When you have read this I feel sure you will sympathize with me rather than censure me.

Eleven days ago, finding that two alarm-clocks were insufficient to awaken me mornings, I purchased a third one. The ten mornings following I reported for work promptly. On the night of the tenth day I set my three clocks for 7.15, 7.30 and 7.45 respectively. As you can readily imagine, the combined ticking of three cheap clocks is rather distracting, and it was some time before I could get to sleep. When, finally, I did doze off, it was into a series of troubled dreams.

DREAM I

For several moments I paid no attention to the monotonous click-click, tick-tock, click-click, tick-tock. I took it for granted that it was only the sound of my three guardsmen of the hours pegging away on their nightly rounds of the three clock dials. Then, gradually, I came to understand that it was nothing of the sort. I was watching a man play billiards. He was reeling

off caroms at a remarkable rate. And every time the balls came together—click-click—a man with a long pointer would mark up the score on the string of buttons above the table—tick-tock.

Once, while the scorer was marking up buttons, I saw him jerk his thumb toward me and wink ostentatiously at the spectators. And such spectators! All sorts and conditions of men, women and children were wedged in like sardines on long raised benches that sloped from the floor up to the ceiling. I'd never seen any of them before, so far as I could tell, but I instinctively recognized them as all the would-be contributors whose manuscripts I've rejected since I've been with the magazine. For some reason I seemed to afford them much amusement. They were pointing at me and nudging each other and laughing.

For the first time I realized that I held a cue in my hand.

"Why, is this a billiard match?" I asked of the marker with considerable surprise. "Am I in on this? When does my turn come?"

At that the crowd laughed uproariously.

"No lack of merit on your part, I assure you," grinned the marker, with another exaggerated wink at the spectators. "But just at present we have so much good matter on hand"—the man at the table was still click-clicking off carom after carom—"that I fear it will be some time before——"

The rest of his remark was lost in another gleeful howl from the crowd.

It was at this point that I noticed a very peculiar thing. No wonder the man at the table was reeling off points with such remarkable regularity. The balls were connected with each other by elastic bands, and every time the man drove them apart they snapped together again—click-click. I started to protest, but the marker was scoring up another point—tick-tock. What would be the use, anyway? I thought. Click-click. The crowd would only laugh at me. Tick-tock. Besides, I was getting very drowsy under the influence of that monotonous click-

click, tick-tock, click-click, tick-tock. I felt myself gradually dropping off to sleep.

While I was asleep I had

DREAM 2

I was in a brilliantly lighted ball-room. The place was crowded with dancers—all sorts of people from almost every period in the world's history. There were vikings, Egyptian queens, young men-about-town, pirates, Roman gladiators, jealous chambermaids, diplomats, kings, burglars, and goodness knows what-not. But for some reason none of them seemed real; they were vague, blurred, indistinct. And, as my eyes became more accustomed to the glare, I began to discover strange anachronisms in their make-ups: vikings with revolvers in their belts; Roman gladiators shod with tennis shoes, and Egyptian queens puffing daintily at Egyptian cigarettes.

While I was standing there, bewildered with the strangeness of it all, half blinded by the kaleidoscopic coloring of the scene, I was suddenly conscious of a woman sweeping toward me—the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. Hair so golden that once my eyes had feasted on it all else became tarnished; eyes as blue as the cloudless skies; lips—but she was speaking to me.

"You may have this dance, after all," she was telling me, "if you don't mind sitting it out. I'm very tired." Then, in an agonized whisper: "Come. Quick! What if they should recognize you?"

I offered her my arm and permitted myself to be led to a conservatory at the farther end of the room. She seated herself beneath a cluster of palms that shut us out from the dancers.

"There," she said, with an air of great relief. "Sit here beside me. Now tell me how you got here? And whatever made you come?"

"Anyone might think you were sorry that I did come," I told her lightly. (I'm the very devil of a fellow when I get in dreams.)

She regarded me curiously for a few

moments. "Have you the slightest idea who is giving this ball?"

I was bound to confess that I hadn't.

"This," she said slowly, as though to impress me with my foolhardiness, "is the first annual ball of characters from rejected stories."

I groaned inwardly. So that was why the dancers all seemed blurred, vague and indistinct. What else could one expect from a lot of poorly drawn characters? Come to think of it, I remembered some of them now—some that I, myself, had rejected. What if they had recognized me? The mere thought of it sent something cold a-creeping up and down my spine. But this golden-haired divinity who had saved me from their wrath—what was she doing in such a motley assemblage?

As though reading my thought she shrank from me, horrified. "I do believe you don't remember me," she gasped. "And here I've been talking to you and——"

"Oh, but I do," I hastened to assure her. "Indeed I do." And I really did, for it had suddenly flashed across my mind that this was Felicia—Felicia of "Felicia's Folly." You remember the story—I thought it charming, but the second and third readers threw it down. They admitted that Felicia in herself was attractive enough, but said that the interest wasn't well sustained, and that in spots the dialogue dragged hopelessly. "But what on earth ever brought *you* here?" I asked her. "And what new folly have you been guilty of since I had the pleasure of first reading you?"

"Ah, then you *do* remember," she said, with a grateful little smile. "For the moment I really feared that you'd been paying the same charming compliments to so many girls at Jones's that you'd entirely forgotten poor me. What new folly have I been up to? None. Every time I return home my respected parent merely tinkers up the old one a bit and sends me off down the line again. I've almost given up hope of ever being accepted anywhere."

She began telling me of the droll in-

cidents in her visits to the various publishers. At first it was very amusing, but as she rattled on, and on, and on, I found that my attention wandered. I began to understand what the third reader meant when he spoke of the dialogue's dragging. It was a case of too much of a good thing. The second reader was right when he said that the interest was not well sustained. Once, I think, she actually caught me nodding, but instead of feeling in the least offended over it she babbled on faster than ever. It was very monotonous. I became drowsy. Felicia's words lost all meaning, and her voice began to sound farther and farther away. Finally—I know it is a very rude thing for one to do when he is sitting beneath potted palms at the side of a beautiful lady, but I really could not help it—I dozed off into a light sleep. While I was asleep I dreamed

DREAM 3

I was in a fortune-teller's tent. The only illumination was a pale, greenish flame that flickered fitfully from a broken skull suspended from the top of the tent.

As the fortune-teller bent over the table, placing a card here, a card there, she spoke rapidly of the things of which fortune-tellers do speak; of wealth, and health, of love, and happiness. I noticed that her voice was pleasant to the ear; that the hand that dealt the cards was small and white; that her eyes were dark and the lashes long, and that her lips were red—red as the rose that nestled in her hair—hair that was black as the rose was red.

"Happiness?" I repeated, when she was gathering up the cards. "Happiness? Then surely there is that in my fortune that you have not yet foretold. If I should ever chance to meet—if I should ever make so bold as to bow"—my eyes were resting on the rose—"to bow to the lady with the red rose in her hair, would—could—?"

"Never!" she answered decidedly.

The color of the rose was reflected in the lady's cheek.

"But you prophesied happiness," I persisted. "And surely there can be no happiness unless the lady with the red rose——"

"Never!"

She raised a flap in the rear of the tent. Heartsick and weary-sad, I passed by her, out into the night.

I lit a cigarette and seated myself on a rustic bench in one of the shaded recesses of the garden. Before long my musings were interrupted by footsteps on the gravel path. I pushed aside a bough that I might see. A white-haired old man and a young woman were coming toward me.

As I looked closer I could see that the woman's hand, as it rested lightly on the old man's arm, was small and white; that her eyes were dark and the lashes long; that her lips were red, and, yes, there was a rose nestling in her raven-black hair.

When the pair were almost opposite me I arose and bowed. The young woman bent her head almost imperceptibly, while the shadow of a half-mocking, half-roguish smile deepened her glance and parted her lips for a second.

And so the fortune-teller's prophecy had come to pass. I was happy, foolishly happy. Nor had the lady with the red rose returned my bow. The rose now in her hair was a white rose.

For a moment after she had gone I stood with beating heart. Then it suddenly occurred to me that as she had passed a tiny bit of paper had fluttered from out the folds of her gown and now lay shining on the moonlit path. I stepped forward to pick it up.

As I stooped I became half-blinded by a glaring white light. A bicyclist, bent far over his handle-bars, was bearing down upon me furiously. He started his bell a-ringing. I tried to step aside, but move as I would I could not escape the path of his glaring headlight. I turned and fled before him. His bell rang louder, and louder, and louder—r-r-rrrrrr!

I redoubled my efforts. No use. I could feel that he was gaining on me. Gathering all my strength for one final

effort, I turned and dived headlong into the shrubbery that lined the path. The bicyclist, with his dazzling headlight, whizzed on past me. But his bell—as I lay there in the shrubbery, scratched and panting—his bell was still ringing in my ears!

Louder, louder, louder it rrr-r-r-rang!

Then, suddenly, the explanation of it flashed upon me; that bell was

THE FIRST ALARM

It awakened me back into Dream 2. I found myself still sitting in the conservatory, at the side of the golden-haired Felicia. I was staring directly at a spluttering arc light suspended above the palms. That, no doubt, accounted for the glaring headlight that had pursued me in my dream.

"Isn't this waltz simply divine!" sighed Felicia. "Don't you just love it?" They were playing "The Beautiful Blue Danube." I assented rather absently. I was musing upon the fact that whenever characters in a certain class of fiction start to dance the orchestra almost invariably gives forth the "soft, throbbing strains of 'The Beautiful Blue Danube.'" Now, of course, it really is a very beautiful waltz, but one would naturally suppose that—

"I have it!" exclaimed Felicia gleefully. "With a false blond mustache they'll never recognize you—they'll take you for a rejected character yourself. Then we can have our waltz. Your knife, please."

Wondering, I opened my pocket-knife and handed it to her. Before I realized what she was about she had loosened the end of her hair and had cut off a strand of three or four inches. She gave it a dexterous twist and pressed it against my upper lip.

"There," she said, with a gay little nod of approval. "What a perfect rejected-story hero! Why, you might have been righting working girls' wrongs all your born days. Come—before the music stops."

Her mood was contagious. I caught

her by the hand and together we ran, laughing, toward the ball-room. But as we reached the door a wild-eyed waiter spied us and rushed up to me.

"Ah, sir," he panted, "I've been 'untin' 'igh and low for you. You're wanted on the 'phone, sir."

"But," I protested, thinking that because of my golden mustache he must have mistaken me for someone else.

"Hit's Mr. Jones, sir, as wants to talk to you," the waiter continued. "This way, sir, please, sir."

Felicia turned pale. "I suppose you had really better go," she faltered.

The waiter led me across the floor, through a confusing maze of ante-rooms, to the telephones. The bell of one of them was ringing violently.

"Third 'phone to the left, sir," was his parting instruction.

I picked up the receiver and placed it to my ear. The bell continued ringing. I tapped impatiently on the hook. Still the ringing continued. Again I yanked at the hook. Instead of ceasing, the ringing became almost ear-splitting. I was about to fling the receiver angrily from me, when the meaning of that ringing slowly dawned upon me. It was

THE SECOND ALARM

It awakened me back into Dream 1. The man at the billiard-table was still reeling off caroms. Finally he paused. The scorer held up his hand for silence. The billiardist drew back his cue with great deliberation, and then—bang! He sent the balls a-crashing with a force that I thought must surely break the rubber bands connecting them. But no; they snapped together again with a loud click-click. The billiardist turned to the spectators and solemnly bowed. They jumped to their feet and shrieked with joy.

"Ten million in a single run!" they shouted. "Ten million before the first reader made a single one! Is there any other game he thinks he can play?"

The absurdity of it all irritated me.

"Any fool could make points that

way," I yelled to the scorer, who was taunting me along with the rest of them. "Why, you idiot, I didn't even get a chance to shoot."

"He thinks he can shoot," the scorer called up to the crowd.

"He thinks he can shoot!" they echoed uproariously. "Take him to the shooting gallery! He thinks he can shoot! Ha, ha, ha!"

I tried to explain, but before I had a chance to say a word they were hustling me on toward a door at the end of the room marked "Rifle Range."

I've seen many shooting galleries in my life, but never one like that one. It must have been miles in length. At first I could not see the end of it, but finally, by squinting, I managed to make out three little targets. Two of them seemed to have already been used, but the one on the right was white and new.

The man who had been scorer at the billiard-table handed me an ancient blunderbuss.

"Let your aim always be to please," he told me, with an elaborate bow. The crowd evidently looked upon him as a killing wag, and snickered.

I raised the blunderbuss to my shoulder. The muzzle was so large that it completely hid the targets from view, but rather than prolong the ordeal I fired blindly.

The shot went pattering down the range, bounding from one side of the narrow walls to the other.

The spectators placed their hands to their ears and listened. At last, from far down the other end of the range, there came a faint tinkle-tinkle-tinkle.

"Heavens!" gasped the scorer, sinking weakly to his knees. "It's a bull's-eye!"

The tinkling became louder.

"Bull's-eye!" repeated the spectators in a horrified whisper.

I felt rather proud of my fine work and grinned at them gloatingly. They turned ghastly white and shrank away from me.

The tinkling of the bell was becoming stronger and stronger.

I glanced down the range. The

three targets seemed to be slowly approaching us. The tinkling had developed into a well-sustained r-r-ring.

I turned to the crowd again. They had become blurred and confused from violent trembling. They were fading away. They had faded away.

I looked back at the targets. They were so close now that I could see they were not targets, after all. They were —'twas then that I rightly identified that persistent ringing, it was

THE THIRD ALARM

I was sitting up in bed, staring at the three alarm-clocks on my mantel. They were all agreed that it was 7.45.

I jumped out of bed and scrambled into my clothes. Pausing only to snatch a bite of breakfast at the corner lunch counter, I hurried to the subway. By a quarter of nine I was at the office door. I tried the knob, but the door was locked.

"Odd," I thought. "There's usually someone here by this time."

I pressed the bell. Ah, I could hear people walking around inside. I pushed the bell again. It didn't seem to ring. An uncomfortable feeling took possession of me. Then, for the first time, my eye chanced upon a type-written notice just above the button:

**THIS BELL
DOES NOT RING**

I broke out into a cold perspiration. Was I in one more dream than I had suspected? Could it really be that in addition to the bicycle bell, the telephone bell and the bull's-eye bell I needed this fourth bell, too?—this bell that wouldn't ring?

The very thought of it awoke me with a start in the bed I'd just left—not just left, either, for this time the hands of my three clocks were pointing scornfully to 10.17. This time I really did jump out of bed, and really did rush down to the office. But when I got there it was nearly noon and I found

your note and my pay envelope waiting for me.

And that, Mr. Jones, is the full explanation of my tardiness. Of course, the fact that I was in no way to blame does not in the least alleviate my offense; and yet, sir, it seems to me rather a hardship that the mere lack of a fourth alarm-clock . . .

"Fourth fiddlesticks!" growled Mr. Jones, reaching for a long envelope and jamming the first reader's letter into it. He rang for a boy.

"Jimmy," he said, handing him the envelope, "ask Miss Sears to put a 'form 3 slip' in this, and give it to the messenger that's waiting."

Form 3 is the one that reads:

The editor of Jones's Magazine regrets that he is unable to use the story you so kindly submitted. While it is clever and possesses originality, it is not exactly suited to our present needs.

As for that matter, would the editor of any magazine (this one excepted, of course) be likely to accept such a very impossible story?



AES TRIPLEX

By Harris Merton Lyon

NO doubt Love's lyrics warm the earth,
Sicilian melodies! No doubt
Soft, scented arms are things of worth
To hem a man about!

No doubt soft kisses make life sweet;
With ease the primrose pathway lures,
And Solomon's love with dancing feet
For ages aye endures!

Yet Christ's nailed hands they beckon me,
And vaguely I can feel the urge
That sent Ulysses o'er the sea,
Columbus through the surge!

Though Horace on his farm derides,
The old Greek's hemlock cup discloses
There's something else in life besides
The women, wine and roses!

My heart grows big with nobler beat,
And in my brain the one thought sings.
I leave the lyric life to greet
The God of Epic Things!



TO forget the name of last week's sweetheart means that you are busy, but to forget the name of your first sweetheart means that you are growing old.



The Most Popular Piano
in the World To-day

THE PIANOLA PIANO

Do you know that all over the world—in England, France, Germany, and even far-off Australia—thousands of people will be made happier this year—thousands of homes made brighter by this new piano that **everyone** can play?

First, the Pianola Piano *is* a piano.

It can take the place of *any other piano*, because it can be played by hand, the same as any other.

No other upright made has finer tone, better action or more beautiful case.

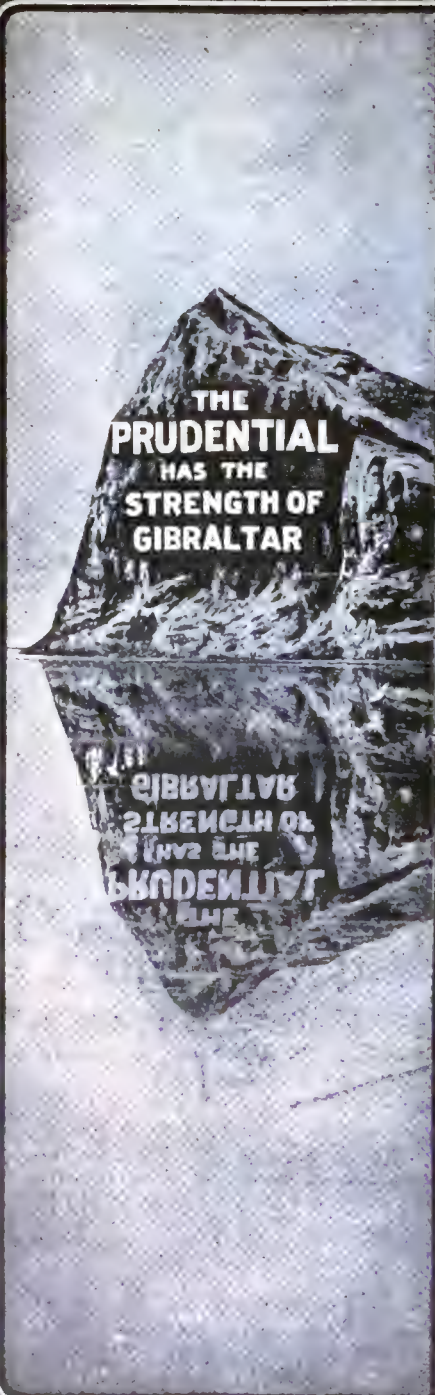
Second, the Pianola Piano contains the famous Metrostyle Pianola (recently so wonderfully improved by the new Themodist).

This means that *everyone* who sits down in front of the Pianola Piano immediately becomes an *expert pianist*.

Wouldn't you like to own one of these wonderful pianos, which are above criticism from a musical standpoint—which enable you to hear **all** the world's best music—which **you yourself** can play?

Pianola Pianos cost from \$500 to \$1050. Let us send you Catalog S, and tell you a plan that makes their purchase easy.

THE AEOLIAN CO., Aeolian Hall, 362 Fifth Ave., near 34th St., N. Y.



In the Calm Days

Think of Life Insurance

This is the Time to Reflect

Your family are comfortable
now.

What would be their condi-
tion if You were not here
to protect and Support
them?

It might not be such clear
sailing then.

In Calm or in Storm Life In-
surance Is the One Resource
Always Certain and Secure.

Send for rates at your age and information of
The Prudential's liberal and popular policies.

THE PRUDENTIAL

Insurance Company of America

Incorporated as a Stock Company by the State of New Jersey

JOHN F. DRYDEN, Pres.

Home Office: NEWARK, N. J.

Dept. 16)

Pabst Extract

The "Best" Tonic

Strength
Vigor



For Insomnia

Peaceful, refreshing sleep is one of the essentials to perfect health. Without it the system is soon run down and the nerves shattered. Yet many a woman, after a day of trials in the household, school or office, is robbed of this much needed rest, while many a man, retiring to sleep, finds himself grinding over and over the business of the day, and slumber, although aggravatingly striven for, becomes an impossibility. This is what is termed insomnia---business cares, fatigue or excitement keep the brain in a whirl, but no matter what the cause, speedy relief can be found in

Pabst Extract The "Best" Tonic

Containing the bracing, toning, soothing properties of the choicest hops blended in a wholesome manner with the vital, tissue building and digestive elements of pure, rich barley malt, it not only quiets the nerves, producing sweet, refreshing sleep, but furnishes nourishment in predigested form that rebuilds the debilitated system and carries in it muscle, tissue and blood making constituents. With peaceful rest thus assured, the system nourished and the appetite stimulated, causing a desire for and making possible the digestion of heavier foods, a condition of perfect health is rapidly assured.

Pabst Extract The "Best" Tonic

being a rich, nourishing, predigested food that is ready for assimilation by the blood as soon as taken into the stomach, brings relief and cure to the nervous, strengthens the convalescent, builds up the anaemic and overworked, restores lacking energy and is a boon to nursing mothers.

Guaranteed under the National Pure Food Law. U. S. Serial No. 1921.

Free Picture and Book

Send us your name on a postal for our interesting booklet and "Baby's First Adventure," a beautiful picture of baby life. Both FREE. Address
PABST EXTRACT DEPT. G Milwaukee, Wis.



For Sale at all Leading
Druggists

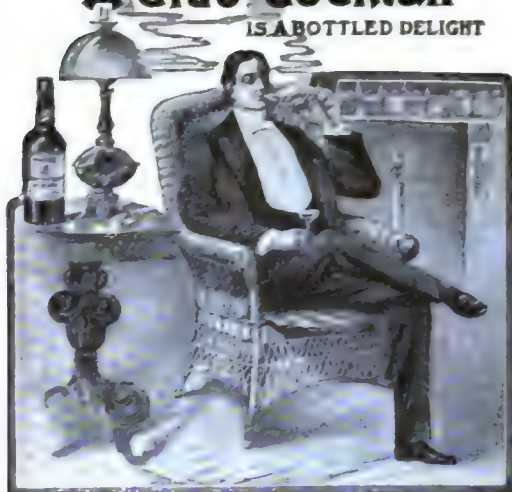
Insist upon the Original

Boston, Mass.

My wife being in a low state of health has received marked benefit from Pabst Extract. It never fails to secure a night's sleep for her when she takes it when being tired and nervous.

J. H. SHERMAN,
M. D.

A Club Cocktail IS A BOTTLED DELIGHT



THOUSANDS have discarded the idea of making their own cocktails—all will after giving the CLUB COCKTAILS a fair trial. Scientifically blended from the choicest old liquors and mellowed with age make them the perfect cocktails that they are. Seven kinds, most popular of which are Martini (Gin base), Manhattan (Whiskey base).

The following label appears on every bottle:

Guaranteed under the National Pure Food and Drugs Act, Approved June 30th, 1906. Serial No. 1707.

G. F. HEUBLEIN & BRO., Sole Props.
Hartford New York London

Hotel Martinique

Broadway, 32d and 33d Streets

Under the same management as the Hotel St. Denis

That splendid service and attention to small details that have made the "St. Denis" famous among the older New York hotels are now duplicated in the very centre of the shopping and theatre district.

The Martinique offers at moderate rates the very highest standard of entertainment to the transient public.

Rooms \$2 and upwards.
With bath \$3.50 and upwards.
Parlor, bedroom and bath
\$6 and upwards.

The Martinique restaurants have already become famous for their excellence of cuisine and service.

Wm. Taylor & Son (Inc.)

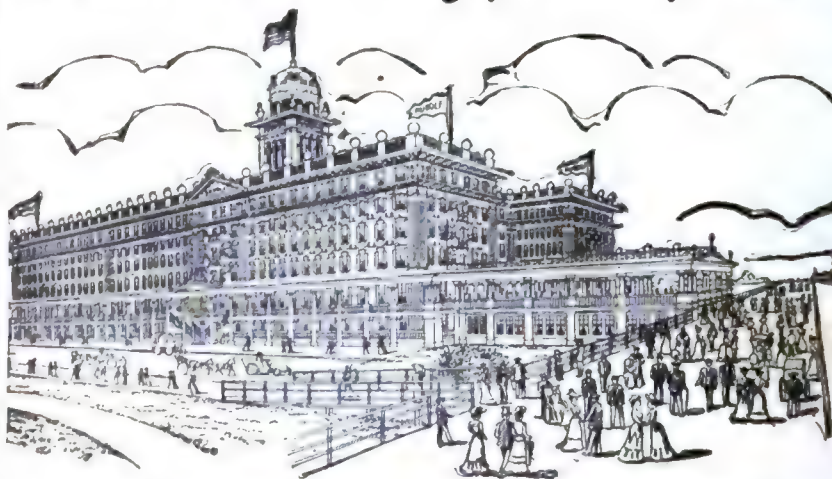
Atlantic City, N. J., WORLD'S RENOWNED HEALTH RESORT

HOTEL RUDOLF

LARGEST AND
MOST MODERN
HOTEL ON THE
COAST.

DIRECTLY ON
OCEAN FRONT
AND BEACH
PROMENADE.

Open all the
year.



New York's Aristocratic Location. Favorite All-year Seaside Resort. Capacity 1000. American and European Plan. Rooms with Bath. Hot and Cold Sea and Fresh Water Baths. Dining Room overlooks the ocean. **THE FINEST SALT WATER BATHING. BALMY SEA AIR. FISHING AND SAILING A POPULAR PASTIME. SEND FOR BOOKLET AND RATES.**

A Special Feature of this Hotel is the reproduction of the celebrated "Harveys" cuisine.

JOEL HILLMAN, Proprietor, Atlantic City, N. J.

Also Proprietor "Harveys," Washington, D. C.



THE OLDEST INHABITANT OF BALTIMORE
CAN HARDLY REMEMBER WHEN

HUNTER WHISKEY

WAS FIRST PUT UPON THE MARKET. ITS STEADY GROWTH
IN POPULARITY THROUGHOUT THESE MANY YEARS PROVES
IT THE PERFECT PRODUCT OF THE STILL

Sold at all first-class cafes and by jobbers. WM. LANAHAHAN & SON, Baltimore, Md.

HOTEL CUMBERLAND

NEW YORK

S. W. Cor. Broadway at 54th Street



Ideal Location. Near Theatres, Shops,
and Central Park

New, Modern and Absolutely Fireproof.
Coolest Summer Hotel in New York.

Close to 6th Ave. "L" and Subway and accessible to
all surface car lines. Transient rates \$2.50 with Bath
and up. All outside rooms.

Special rates for summer months.

SEND FOR BOOKLET

Under the Management of **HARRY P. STIMSON**
Formerly with Hotel Imperial, New York.

R. J. BINGHAM, Formerly with Hotel Woodward.

BLACK & WHITE SCOTCH WHISKY

GUARANTEED

TO CONFORM WITH THE PURE FOOD LAW

JAMES BUCHANAN & Co. LTD.
DISTILLERS

ARTHUR J. BILLIN, U.S. MGR.
29 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.



*It is pure of the purest, with a sparkle its own,
Of the delicate flavor that long lingers on;
Thorough-bred, thorough-ripened, for long years it has lain,
Till it's rich, rare and royal—The Great Western Champagne.*

The fine wine grape, possessing the same qualities as those grown in France, with the French method of making, give

Great Western Extra Dry Champagne

the exquisite taste and sparkling effervescence of the best foreign wines. Great Western is made under the same identical methods as the most select French Champagnes, and it is aged for five years in the same kind of cellars. This gives Great Western an excellence which the French connoisseurs themselves recognize.

Nearly one hundred years of cultivation of Great Western vineyards in New York State have given the soil the elements that produce the same peculiar quality Champagne grape as grown in the famous vineyards of France.

At the Paris Exposition Great Western Champagne was awarded a gold medal for quality.

Great Western Champagne costs 50% less than the imported. The U. S. Custom House receives no revenue from Great Western and you get 100% wine value.

Try Great Western—we like comparisons.

PLEASANT VALLEY WINE CO., Sole Makers, RHEIMS, N. Y.

Sold by dealers in fine Wines and served in Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes.

Where Senator Clark Made His Millions



Captain William McDermott

and the life story of the man (Capt. Wm. McDermott) who made the fabulous Clark fortune, is an interesting book every enterprising person should read. It also tells about an investment in the phenomenal resources of one of the wealthiest sections of the U. S. An opportunity no one but Senator Clark could have offered you until now. It gives facts and figures not usu-

ally published for general distribution. How to use judgment and foresight in selecting for investment, tangible enterprises that can "show you"—How to use other people's knowledge to make money like Senator Clark did. We have arranged to distribute a limited edition of this book free. To be well informed on a subject of so vital interest, you should write for a copy to-day and read it thoroughly. This means more to you than you can realize until you receive it.

A postal request will bring it to you prepaid.

O. B. STANTON & SON

1543 Real Estate Trust Bldg., Philadelphia

French Lick—West Baden Springs

The Ideal Place to Rest—Perfect Hotel Accommodations. Open the year 'round. Offers every attraction to seekers of Health—Rest—Recreation



Situated in Southern Indiana on the

MONON ROUTE

Write for descriptive booklet, rates, etc

CHAS. H. ROCKWELL

FRANK J. REED

Traffic Manager

Gen'l Passenger Agent

Custom House Place, CHICAGO

THE INTERNATIONAL DENTIFRICE

Strong's Arnica Tooth Soap

antiseptic, preserves while it beautifies—sweetens the breath—hardens the gums—whitens the teeth—
A leading dentifrice for a

THIRD OF A CENTURY

The metal package is most convenient for travel or the home. No liquid or powder to spill or waste.

25 Cents—At All Druggists
(Sent postpaid if yours hasn't it)

STRONG'S ARNICA JELLY
Ideal for sunburn, keeps the skin soft and smooth; nothing better for chaps, pimples, burns, bruises and all eruptions. The collapsible metal tube is convenient and unbreakable. If your dealer hasn't it, send to us. Sent postpaid for

25 Cents

ARNICA TOOTH SOAP

Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30, 1906; Serial No. 1612.

C. H. STRONG & CO.
CHICAGO, U. S. A.



MENNEN'S
BORATED TALCUM TOILET POWDER

"YOU'RE SAFE"
in the hands of the little captain at the helm,—the "complexion specialist," whose results are certain, whose fees are small.

MENNEN'S
Borated Talcum
TOILET POWDER

protects and soothes, a sure relief from sunburn, Prickly Heat, Chafing, etc. Put up in non-refillable boxes—the "box that licks"—for your protection. If Mennen's face is on the cover it's genuine and a guarantee of purity. Delightful after shaving. Guaranteed under Food & Drugs Act, June 30, 1906. Serial No. 1542. Sold everywhere, or by mail, 25c.

SAMPLE FREE

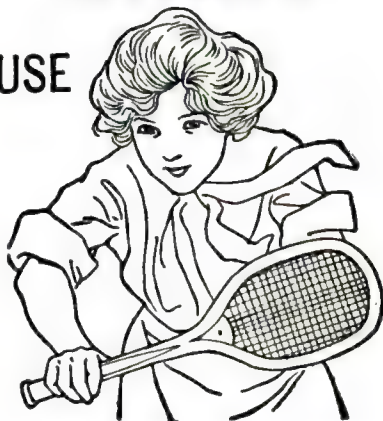
G. Mennen Co., Newark, N.J.

Try Mennen's Violet Borated Talcum Powder
It has the scent of fresh cut Parma Violets.



SUMMER GIRLS

USE



Cuticura SOAP

Assisted by Cuticura Ointment, the purest and sweetest of Summer Emollients, for preserving, purifying, and beautifying the skin, scalp, hair, and hands, for irritations of the skin, heat rashes, sunburn, bites and stings of insects, lameness and soreness incidental to summer sports, for sham-pooling, and for all the purposes of the toilet and bath.

Sold throughout the world. Depots: London, 27, Charterhouse Sq.; Paris, 5, Rue de la Paix; Australia, R. Towns & Co.; Sydney, India, B. K. Paul, Calcutta; China, Hong Kong Drug Co.; Japan, Maruya, Ltd.; Tokio; Russia, Ferrein (Apteka), Moscow; South Africa, Lennen, Ltd., Cape Town, etc.; U.S.A., Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., Boston.

Post-free, Cuticura Book on Care of the Skin.



Whitehall

DR. WHITEHALL'S MEGRIMINE RELIEVES ALL FORMS OF HEADACHE AND NEURALGIA

In twenty to thirty minutes. Send a postal today for trial box. We send it without cost. Megrimine has been used so extensively for painful nervous troubles by hospitals, sanitariums and the general public for twenty years, that it now is a standard remedy in the home. A trial is sufficient to recommend it to others. Ask any druggist or address

The DR. WHITEHALL MEGRIMINE CO., 338 N. Main Street, South Bend, Ind.



Corsage for Waist and Hips

REDUCE THE FLESH

By using
Dr. Jeanne Walter's
**Medicated Rubber
Undergarments**

Will positively reduce flesh exactly where desired. Endorsed by medical authorities. Worn with comfort. For both women and men.

Write for Booklet S.

DR. JEANNE WALTER
(Patentee)

Alpine Building
55 W. 33d St., New York
Agencies in large cities.

A Liberal Sample of CHARMENE

A Scientific preparation
for removing superfluous hair

FREE!



We want to give to every woman afflicted with a disagreeing growth a liberal sample of this depilatory. **CHARMENE** is a most delightful toilet preparation which absolutely removes every vestige of hair from the face, neck or arms. It is guaranteed to permanently destroy the root forever.

CHARMENE contains no caustics and will not injure the most delicate skin. It softens, whitens and beautifies the skin and may be used even though no hairs are present.

Its dainty cosmetic effect is soothing and grateful. When we send the sample package free, we will also send our handsome book on "Beauty Advice," with complexion hints and advice on other **CHARMENE** preparations, Massage, Face Cream, Face Powder and Hairluxe.

Write today—**NOW**—for the free sample and book, or send us \$1.00 for full size package by mail, postpaid. Money refunded if not entirely satisfactory.

The Charmene Chemical Co., 19 Huron Road, Cleveland, O.

SONG POEMS WANTED
also Musical Composition. We pay Royalty, Publish and Popularize. We compose and arrange music free of charge. Established 1883. Send us your work.
GEO. JABERG MUSIC CO.
203 W. SEVENTH STREET, CINCINNATI, O.

MORPHINE

PAINLESS AND PERMANENT
Home Cure

A Trial Treatment Free

Sent to anyone addicted to the use of Morphine, Opium, Laudanum, Cocaine or other drug habit. Contains Vital Principle heretofore unknown and lacking in all others. We restore the nervous and physical systems and thus remove the cause. Confidential correspondence invited from all, especially physicians having refractory cases.
ST. PAUL ASSOCIATION, 48 E. Van Buren St., CHICAGO, ILL.

For Over 60 Years

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup

has been used for over SIXTY YEARS by MILLIONS of Mothers for their CHILDREN while TEETHING, with perfect success. IT SOOTHES the CHILD, SOFTENS the GUMS, ALLAYS all pain, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHŒA. Sold by Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup and take no other kind. 25 Cents a Bottle.

An Old and Well-tried Remedy

There is Nothing so Soothing as a Mother's Kiss
EXCEPT

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

Millions of Mothers will tell you

It soothes the child.

It softens the gums.

It allays all pain.

It cures Wind Colic.

It is the best remedy for Diarrhœa.

It is absolutely harmless and for Sixty years has proved the best remedy for Children Teething.

BE SURE YOU ASK FOR

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

AND TAKE NO OTHER

GUARANTEED UNDER THE FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, JUNE 30th, 1906. SERIAL NUMBER 1098.

New York, July 15, 1907

Mr. Advertiser

ANYWHERE

DEAR SIR:—

Beginning with the August issue, the price of *TRANSATLANTIC TALES* will be reduced to *Fifteen (15) Cents per copy.*

Think what that means for the circulation !
It should more than double in the first sixty days.

It is a bargain NOW at \$50 per page, with more than *32,000 circulation*, but it is my candid belief that if you will send me a yearly contract beginning with the September number, before the contract expires you will be paying not more than fifty (50) cents per page per thousand.

Is not this something to make you sit up and think ?

Be sure and put *TRANSATLANTIC TALES* on your list.

Very truly yours,


ADV. MANAGER.

Ess Ess Publishing Company



Special to Our Readers

THE SMART SET	\$2.50	} OUR PRICE
The READER MAGAZINE	\$3.00	
		\$2.95

Two high-class magazines for less than the price of one of them

With March of this year The Reader Magazine started the publication of some of the most remarkable political debates in the history of the United States—debates between William Jennings Bryan and Senator Beveridge on "The Problems of the People." These debates upon questions vital to every thinking man will continue for the following

year and cover every important question now before the people—the Trusts, Labor, Tariff, Railroad Regulations, Imperialism, Swollen Fortunes, all come under the able consideration of these men.

We were so impressed by the importance to the public at large of these debates, that we secured from The Reader Magazine a price which enables us to offer our subscribers, new or old, a year's subscription to The Smart Set (regular price, \$2.50) and to The Reader (regular price \$3.00) for \$2.95, and **in addition** we will send **free** the numbers of The Reader already published (March, April, May, June and July) which contain the first of these debates. Thus is offered you at a nominal cost the greatest fiction magazine and the greatest news magazine of the country, and more—a complete series of these able discussions of the pressing questions of the day. Take advantage of it! We are advised by the publishers of The Reader that their supply of back numbers containing these debates is limited; we can give them only as long as they last. Delay in ordering may lose you the extra free copies.

ESS ESS PUBLISHING CO.

**452 FIFTH AVENUE
N. Y. CITY**

Cut off, fill out and mail today

ESS ESS PUBLISHING CO.
452 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. City.

Gentlemen:—

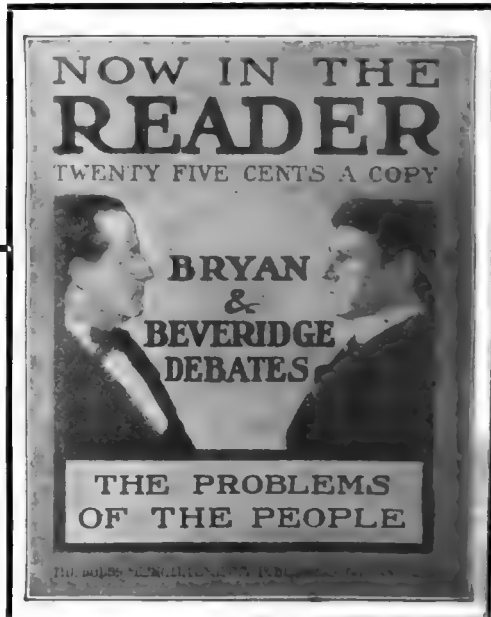
Please find enclosed herewith cheque—money order for \$2.95 for one year's subscription to The Reader Magazine and The Smart Set to start with the _____ number. In addition you are to send me, absolutely free, the back numbers of The Reader Magazine containing the Bryan-Beveridge debates from the first number.

Name.....

Address.....

Date.....

ss Aug.



THERE'S MONEY IN STOCKS

But Two Essentials are Necessary YOU MUST KNOW WHEN TO BUY AND WHEN TO SELL

Many good chances for profit have been missed, because correct and unbiased information was not at hand—**WHEN TO BUY AND WHEN TO SELL—WHAT TO BUY AND WHAT TO SELL.**

Town Topics Financial Bureau

aims to give you that information. It does not profess infallibility but it does insist that **ITS FACILITIES FOR OBTAINING IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND JUDGING FINANCIAL CONDITIONS ARE UNEQUALED**, and its advice **ABSOLUTELY UNBIASED**.

It is conservative in judgment, fair in criticism.

It **OPERATES NO ACCOUNTS** and deprecates gambling propositions.

Special attention is given to investment and other securities, and we are prepared to furnish reliable reports thereon.

SUCCESS IN SPECULATION or **INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES** is largely a question of good judgment, guided by experience and proper information.

Town Topics Financial Bureau

has been in existence seventeen years. It has experience and judgment, and knows where and how to gather information, without which the first two qualifications are of little value.

The bureau's **SOLE BUSINESS IS TO FURNISH ADVICE AND INFORMATION** on stocks, cotton and grain.

All inquiries will receive careful and prompt attention.

For further particulars write for circular.

Town Topics Financial Bureau,

(Telephone 262 Broad.)

44 BROAD ST., NEW YORK.

Resort Managers

Know the value of THE SMART SET as an advertising medium. It reaches all the people of wealth and social position in the United States. The patronage of its readers alone could make the future of a place assured.

The Smart Set
452 Fifth Ave., New York

THE LOVE LETTERS OF A LIAR

By MRS. WILLIAM ALLEN

In graceful, appealing and ardent epistles, an American Girl is wooed by an American man. These "Letters" are a record of that wooing.

No similar book can compare with the style and cleverness of this delightful series.

Do not miss the pleasantest of hours in reading these LETTERS.

Prettily printed on thick deckle-edge paper, and bound in flexible imitation leather.

PRICE 50 CENTS, POSTPAID

ESS ESS PUBLISHING CO., - - - - 452 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

MODENE

**HAIR ON
FACE
NECK
AND
ARMS
INSTANTLY
REMOVED
WITHOUT
INJURY TO
THE MOST
DELICATE SKIN**



IN COMPOUNDING, an incomplete mixture was accidentally spilled on the back of the hand, and on washing afterward it was discovered that the hair was completely removed. We named the new discovery **MODENE**. It is absolutely harmless, but works sure results. Apply for a few minutes and the hair disappears as if by magic. It Cannot Fail. If the growth be light, one application will remove it; the heavy growth, such as the beard or growth on moles, may require two or more applications, and without slightest injury or unpleasant feeling when applied or ever afterward.

Modene supersedes electrolysis
Used by people of refinement and recommended by all who have tested its merits.

Modene sent by mail, in safety mailing cases (securely sealed), on receipt of \$1.00 per bottle. Send money by letter, with your full address written plainly. Postage stamps taken.

LOCAL AND GENERAL AGENTS WANTED.
MODENE MANUFACTURING CO.,
Dept. 25, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Every Bottle Guaranteed.

37 We offer \$1,000 for Failure or the Slightest Injury.



IMPERIAL HAIR REGENERATOR

*The Standard Hair Coloring
For Gray or Bleached Hair*

is the only absolutely harmless preparation for either. One application will restore gray hair to its original color or make bleached hair any shade from Black to the lightest Ash Blond. COLORS are DURABLE and NATURAL; when applied CANNOT BE DETECTED; are unaffected by BATHS, SHAMPOOING or SEA BATHING. Permits curling, and leaves the hair soft and glossy. Sample of your hair colored free. Correspondence confidential. The Imperial Hair Regenerator is sold by druggists and applied by hairdressers everywhere, or sent direct, express charges prepaid.

Imperial Chem. Mfg. Co., 135 W. 23d St., N. Y.

OPIUM

MORPHINE AND LIQUOR
Habits Cured in 10 to 20 days. No pay till cured. Sanatorium. Established 1878.
Treatment can be taken at home.

Write
THE DR. J. L. STEPHENS CO., Dept. V5, LEBANON, OHIO

SEND YOUR SONG POEMS TO ME

I will write the music and present to Big N.Y. Publishers. I made a fortune writing songs; my experience will aid you. My songs "Blue Bell" and "Way Down in My Heart" achieved world-wide fame. Write to-day for Free Booklet.
EDWARD MADDEN, 102 Madden Bldg., New York.

TO ADVERTISERS

ONLY high-grade advertisements of thoroughly reliable firms are solicited for this magazine. No better medium is offered this class of advertisers.

PETER'S

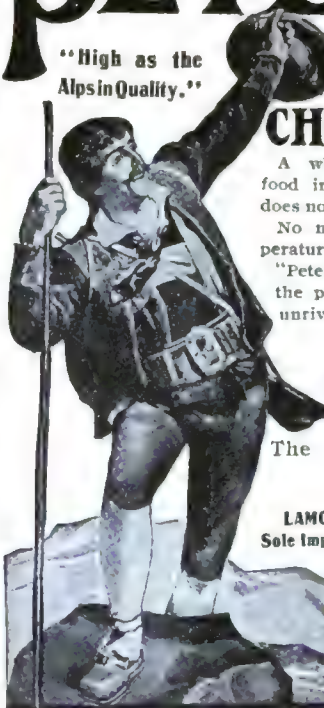
"High as the
Alps in Quality."

THE
ORIGINAL
MILK

CHOCOLATE

A wholesome, sustaining food in compact form that does not create thirst.

No matter what the temperature, the inimitable "Peter Process" insures the purity, freshness and unrivalled flavor of



GALA PETER

The World's Favorite
Chocolate

LAMONT, CORLISS & CO.,
Sole Importers, New York.



DISSOLVENE RUBBER GARMENTS

For the Prevention and the
Reduction of

SUPERFLUOUS FLESH

The only harmless and effectual method.

Phenomenally Successful.

Recommended by Physicians.

Made in Coats, Pants, Belts, &c., for Men and Women, reducing the flesh only where desired, without effort or inconvenience.

Write To-Day for Illustrated Booklet

DISSOLVENE CO.,
20A West 34th St.

(adjoining Waldorf-Astoria), NEW YORK CITY.
Rubber face masks, for removing all impurities, \$5

CRYSTAL Domino SUGAR



A
Triumph
in
Sugar
Making!

Sold only in 5 lb. sealed boxes!

IMAGINATION COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF A HANDIER AND PRETTIER FORM THAN IS PRESENTED IN "CRYSTAL DOMINO SUGAR." NEITHER COULD THE MOST PARTICULAR PEOPLE ASK FOR MORE PERFECT PURITY OR ECONOMICAL PEOPLE FOR LESS WASTE.

HIGHEST GRADE IN THE WORLD.

BEST SUGAR FOR TEA AND COFFEE.

By grocers everywhere.

LAKE of BAYS



**GRAND
TRUNK
RAILWAY
SYSTEM**

THE KILLARNEY of AMERICA "HIGHLANDS of ONTARIO"

A chain of seven beautiful lakes 1,000 feet above sea level. A region replete with natural beauty and loveliness. Good hotel accommodation. Fishing and hunting unsurpassed. 146 miles north of City of Toronto.

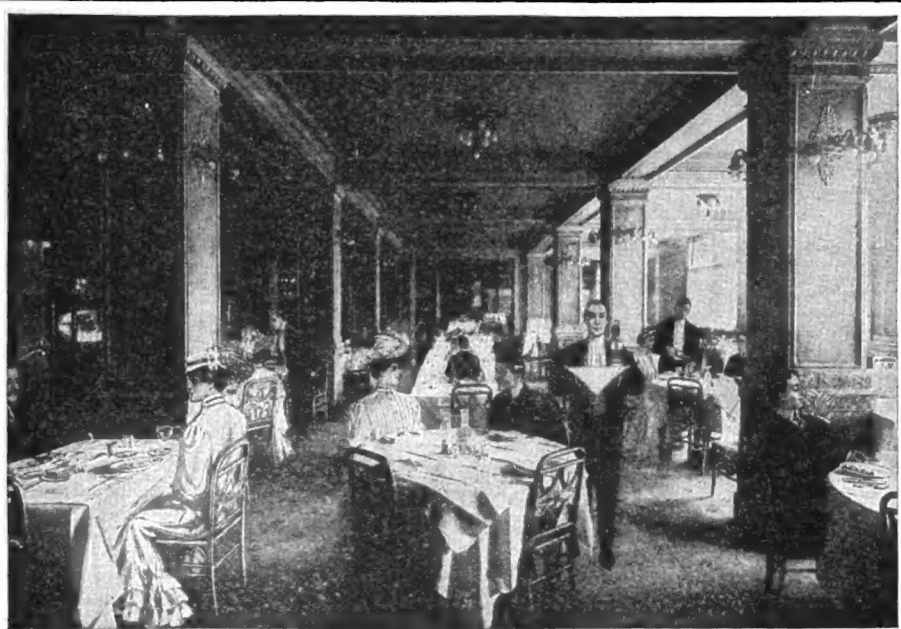
Handsome booklet free. Apply to

G. W. VAUX, 617 Merchants Loan and Trust Building, Chicago, Ill.
F. P. DWYER, 27 Broadway, New York, N.Y. T. H. HANLEY, 300 Washington St., Boston, Mass.
W. ROBINSON, 506 Park Building, Pittsburg, Pa.

W. E. DAVIS
Passenger Traffic Manager, Montreal

G. T. BELL
General Passenger & Ticket Agent, Montreal

**52 POUNDS OF SALMON TROUT
CAUGHT WITH 8-OUNCE STEEL ROD**



Budweiser

The King of Bottled Beers

is served in all the best hotels,
clubs and cafes throughout the
world. It is exquisite in flavor,
perfect in purity and supreme
in sales.

Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass'n
St. Louis, U. S. A.



Sunburn, Chafing, Prickly Heat **Hinds'** ^{Honey and Almond} **Cream**

Is a pure snow-white liquid with a most refreshing odor and effect; it cools and heals the tender, irritated surfaces; prevents peeling or chafing, and makes the skin clear, smooth and velvety. Hinds' Cream is antiseptic,—purifying and cleansing better than soap; it nourishes the tissues, invigorates the circulation, allays prickly heat, removes complexion blemishes. Is best for babies' delicate skin, and for men who shave. Hinds' Cream contains no grease, bleach or chemicals, and is **positively guaranteed not to cause a growth of hair.** Avoid substitutes; there is only one Hinds' Honey and Almond Cream; all others will disappoint you. At your dealer's, 50c., or if not obtainable, sent postpaid by us. Write for Free Sample Bottle.

A. S. HINDS, 39 West Street, Portland, Me.





POND'S EXTRACT

SUNBURN

with its unpleasant and painful effects is quickly relieved by POND'S EXTRACT, the **cooling, healing and refreshing antiseptic**. A toilet necessity during warm weather.

THE STANDARD FOR 60 YEARS

So'd only in sealed bottles—never in bu:k.
Substitutes are always disappointing.

Valuable Free Booklet "First Aid to the Injured"—Write

LAMONT, CORLISS & CO., Agents, Dept. F, 75 HUDSON STREET
NEW YORK

THE SILENT MAID AND PORTABLE COIFFURE MIRRORS



Is indispensable to all well dressed ladies. As a coiffure mirror it shows a full view of the front, sides, back and top of the coiffure. Can be carried in a suit case. No woman should go to the country without one.

THE COIFFURE MIRROR CO.,

Cambridge Bldg., 33rd St. and 5th Ave., opp. The Waldorf-Astoria, N. Y.
Atlantic City, Keeler's Drug Stores. Pittsburgh, Pa., 276 Craig St.

THE TIGHT FITTING WAY



Don't Suffer In Hot Weather

From tight-fitting underwear,
LOOSE FITTING

B.V.D.

Trade Mark. Registered U.S. Patent Office

Coat Cut Undershirts

and

Knee Length Drawers

are cool and comfortable because they allow perfect freedom of motion and permit refreshing air to reach the pores.

COPYRIGHT 1906 BY ERLANGER BROTHERS.

50c., \$1.00 and \$1.50 a garment.

Insist upon seeing on every garment you purchase, the B. V. D. woven label which consists of three white letters B. V. D. on a red woven background. It insures you a correctly cut, perfect fitting, well made undergarment. Do not be deceived. Accept no "just as good."

LOOK FOR THE B. V. D. RED WOVEN LABEL. IT'S YOUR GUARANTEE OF VALUE.

If your dealer will not get B. V. D. underwear for you, write us.

Illustrated seven-color booklet free upon request.

ERLANGER BROTHERS

Dept. "O"

Worth and Church Sts. New York City



DUPONT BRUSHES



Made of the best "bristles" and "backs" procurable—put together by the most skilled labor, in an absolutely clean and sanitary factory—the largest and most complete in the world.

DUPONT BRUSHES

outlast several ordinary brushes—but cost no more.

Hundreds of styles—in all

woods, real

ebony, bone,

pearl, ivory

—for hair,

teeth, face,

hands, clothes,

etc.

If not at your

dealer's, kindly

write us and

we will see

that you

are supplied.

NAME
DUPONT
ON EVERY BRUSH

FREE BOOKLET

explaining how to select and take care of brushes, etc., sent on receipt of your name and address to

E. DUPONT & CO.

PARIS BEAUVAIS LONDON
New York Office 26-28 Washington Place

GENTLEMEN
WHO DRESS FOR STYLE
NEATNESS, AND COMFORT
WEAR THE IMPROVED

BOSTON GARTER

THE RECOGNIZED STANDARD

The Name is stamped on every loop—

The

Velvet Grip
CUSHION
BUTTON
CLASP

LIES FLAT TO THE LEG—NEVER SLIPS, YEARS NOR UNFASTERS

Sample pair, Silk 50c., Cotton 25c. Mailed on receipt of price.

GEO. FROST CO., Makers,
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.



ALWAYS EASY

VOSE PLANOS

have been established over 55 YEARS. By our system of payments every family in moderate circumstances can own a VOSE piano. We take old instruments in exchange and deliver the new piano at your home free of expense.

VOSE & SONS PIANO CO., Boston, Mass.